WITH RESPECTS.



THE AUTHOR

A CIVILISATION AT BAY

India—Past, Present and Future

BY THE LATE

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(Entomologist to the Government of Mysore)

PRICE RUPEES THREE

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MADRAS

NOTE BY PUBLISHER

THE undersigned deeply regrets the delay in the publication of this book. The delay was caused by an unfortunate litigation consequent on the sudden death of the author, and was unavoidable. But for the kind services of two noble friends, even this fulfilment of my duty would have been extremely difficult. Recording herein my sincere gratitude to Dr. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayyagaru and Sjt. K. Krishna Iyengar is the least that I can do, situated as I am. The author himself wished to thank them ardently, and now I have much greater reason to do so.

KOUSALLIA KUNHIKANNAN

A BRIEF MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR

WHETHER beloved by the Gods or not, Indians generally die young, and Dr. K. Kunhikannan has been yet one more example of it. His sudden death by cerebral hæmorrhage has been a greater loss to the country than to those immediately near and dear to him. The country, which lies at the parting of ways and before a myriad problems, can ill-afford to lose her thinking sons, and has lost in him a thinker of the first rank.

It is not easy for any single acquaintance of his to present a pen picture of the late doctor, for his mind was too varied and comprehensive in outlook and attainments. It was easily possible and common for acquaintances to have met and talked occasionally with him, and yet remain ignorant of the fact that he was an entomologist. He was familiar "with the doctrines not merely of Science, his own chosen field of study, but also of Politics, Sociology, Ethics, Psychology, Religion and Humanities and Aesthetics" as a reviewer of 'The West' admiringly wrote; unless one knew him well, it was not possible to make out wherein he was a specialist. In conversation he usually said the best thing about any subject, and his were the most informed opinions. There was not a subject in which he was not interested, or in which he did not seek for information. Natural, therefore, that Dr. Sir B. N. Seal and he appreciated each other

perhaps Dr. Seal was the only person whose intellectual association he valued.

His circle of acquaintance was not a wide one. Being an asthmatic, he was not physically active, and, being an earnest thinker, he did not seek society for mere amusement or passing time. He was a singular example of a man placed in a fairly high official position, but refreshingly free from those superior and self-satisfied airs which usually distinguish the official. There could be no more agreeable or entertaining companion for any acquaintance; though he did know and move among the high circles of the official world, he did so, as far as it was unavoidable, without caring overmuch to cultivate such acquaintance further. He felt drawn by and drew to himself only such earnest and genuine workers who had some spirit of sacrifice in them, and who were eager to understand things in the right perspective. He would not waste his leisure in circles where the conversation would spin round and round promotions, personalities or scandalous piffle.

Of more interest and importance would be an account of the formation of his views. He was a brilliant student of a backward and even oppressed community, educated like most others in the " pot-culture of a hot house system " : he held in his younger days 'radical' views on Indian problems and spoke energetically of them. A change in outlook came on with the passing of years, the former admiration of the West yielding place to distrust as is described in his own words in the opening chapter

of "The West". Possessing a vigorous mind and trained to habits of accurate thought, he eagerly read through all that was accessible to him about India and her age-old civilisation. During the period of War, when Mr. Lionel Curtis was touring in India, this keen scholar had a discussion with him regarding the future government of the country; his views then being opposed to the withdrawal of the British from the government of the country. Mr. Curtis greatly appreciated him, and was eager to sponsor any book that might be projected on such lines. The offer was a tempting one, carrying, as it did, an assurance of official favours and opening the door to a prosperous and brilliant career. But Mr. Curtis dealt with a man who was first and foremost a patriot, and who was, above all, honest and conscientious. While he was unable to join those who vigorously demanded Self-Government on democratic lines for the country, he doubted in his own mind the soundness of his own views which seemed to lie dangerously near those put forward in season and out of season by the interested foreigner. Dr. Kunhikannan would not be intellectually dishonest, and sacrificed a promised career of official favours for his sincerity. This was his own sacrifice for the country; he spoke very rarely of it, and emphasised how small a sacrifice it was when he did.

His father, who was well versed in Sanskrit lore in addition to being a wide reader, used to restrain the impetuosity with which his son aired his opinions. "When you consider all aspects, you will feel convinced that your views are hasty,"

was his gentle correction, and in affectionate remembrance of it, the doctor dedicated his first book to the memory of his father. "The West" was written after his foreign travels during which the revised views were getting slowly crystallised in his mind. When such a mastermind as Dr. Seal heard the manuscript of the book through and felt charmed with the analysis presented therein, Dr. Kunhikannan felt amply rewarded and firmly entrenched in his opinions. When the book provoked warm praise from Eastern and Western readers, he was eager to write about India. As a complement to his book on the West, he planned this work, setting forth the salient features of Indian civilisation, and pointing out how every feature is threatened with disruption by forces released by British rule in the country. He worked at the book in the midst of ill-health and other preoccupations; he little minded sacrificing his health for it, and now it has happened that the preparation of the work, invloving, as it did, prolonged overwork, has cost him his life.

This book was but to serve as a preliminary to others. He did not regard this as of a high order. Working on a vast canvas, he was not sure that his survey had been exhaustive; a few days before passing away, he was saying that a chapter on Labour in India should be added. He felt that he had not presented some aspects of traditional Indian life, such as Recreations, Science, and Scientific research, etc., and that some chapters, notably that on Indian Muhammadans, required amplification and elaboration. But as this

particular book was only to serve as an introduction to later deeper studies, he reserved all such and much more, in the belief that Time would deal kindly with him. He had projected a book on Brahmins in India in the mode of Swift, and another about official bunglings and oppressions in villages. He intended to write a book on Educational Reconstruction in India. It is hardly possible to say what further subjects he would have written on.

He was highly competent for such tasks. His wide reading was critical and his thinking deep and unbiassed. He had little or no regard for dilettantism. He collected facts with jealous care and received them without any prejudice engendered by preconceived notions; when there was a sufficient wealth of facts, he would then set about the explanation. So it happens in his studies that the explanation suits the facts, and not *vice versa* as in studies where facts are few or are selected to suit a theory. The brilliant and original studies of the joint family, caste, etc., in this book have been the results of earnest inquiry and anxious thought extending over years. There seems to be no doubt that his being a distinguished student of science enabled him to preserve this detachment of mind.

His labours in his own field of Entomology, while following the same method of gathering facts first with an unbiassed mind, and interpreting them later, had an important characteristic. He was first and last an economic entomologist. Keenly alive to the depressing conditions of Indian

agriculture, and no less mindful of the cherished ideas of the ryot, he pursued problems of immediate concern, and propounded solutions and remedies which would neither conflict with the ryot's 'old world' notions nor be beyond his slender means. He was thus able to render eminent service to the cultivator in regard to combating pests of stored grains, sugar-cane, lime and orange. The cochineal insect, which is now familiar to the Mysore farmer as the destroyer of cactus, was his introduction. A similar biological control of the sugar-cane borer was engaging his energies at the time of his decease. In one field particularly, *viz.*, the biological control of insect pests and noxious weeds, in which one insect, under highly specialised conditions, is used to combat some other harmful insect or destructive weed, he rendered great service to the State of Mysore. Eager to devise remedies in keeping with the resources of the ryot, he had undertaken research work in regard to the insecticidal properties of a number of local plants, some of which are already being used as fish poisons. Further research in this direction is expected to render the operation of spraying cheap. Dr. Leslie Coleman emphasising this aspect of the late doctor's work was of opinion that Dr. Kunhikannan's name "will find enduring association with Entomological investigations in this State, more especially with reference to the devising of methods of insect control adapted to our conditions", and that "Dr. Kunhikannan displayed a real genius, and his is a shining example for the Entomologist of the future".

In the province of pure Entomology as well, Dr. Kunhikannan was not behind. His thesis on "The function of the prothoracic plate in Bruchid Larvæ" is admittedly of a high standard while the experiments that he was conducting for some time in regard to the relation between the body temperature of insects and their different natural environments reveal remarkable scientific acumen.

But while his successes in research have been well known, the ideas that he wanted to pursue cannot be fully known. The use of oleaginous leaves to stifle mosquitoes in their breeding places was his idea. He was also on the look-out for a prawn for protecting stored grain. It is indeed a great pity that such an able scientist with his eye set in the correct direction, and gifted with such shrewdness should have been cut off in his prime.

This characteristic of a patriotic Indian scientist with the proper outlook for problems was strongly evidenced whenever he lectured to students of science. He had realised the terrible fact of foodlessness in the country and suggested that research might be undertaken in regard to problems of food, as for instance, edible fish and their introduction into tanks. In a lecture to Medical students, he put before them the idea of the study of the human pulse with a method wherein the Ayurvedic and Allopathic systems would be co-ordinated. He felt more and more convinced that Hindu traditional knowledge, even when distorted and apparently dogmatic, was

based on profound perceptions of truth. Hundreds of suggestions for research he had, and therefore the proposal of a Research Institute in the appendix to this book was not an idle or a passing fancy. In fact, throughout the book there is nothing of a superficial nature; every sentence is a summation of his thoughts and thought-experiences. There is much more behind every phrase than has been expressed.

Always he used to deplore the fact that professors of Science in India did not have the necessary perspective, which led them to begin, when they began at all, at the wrong end for research. He was stoutly against a proposal to prescribe Marine Zoology for students in the Mysore University, for instance; he wanted science to have relation to the students' environment and not be remote from it. A rare and true scientist, he was one of the very few whose enthusiasm for their own special subject of study did not get the better of a robust common sense. Talking of the mysteries and miracles of performing Sadhus and Sanyasins, he would say: "The true scientist confronted with such phenomena should say 'I do not know' as the really great scientists do and have done. No true student of science will display any arrogance."

This was, indeed, an absorbing theme with him. He was a careful reader of the experiences of foreigners in the country, and an equally careful gatherer of authentic accounts of such inexplicable happenings from acquaintances. Being a native

of Malabar, he had collected a rich store of true and real happenings concerning hypnotism, ghosts and spirits, black magic, the *mantras*, etc. He had studied them as far as was possible for him and was feeling eager to study them systematically in order to be able to expound them later on. While he admired Sir John Woodroffe for his remarkable efforts, he regretted very keenly the fact that few Indians attempted to explore and unravel scientifically the mysteries of the *mantra*. In fact, it was the failure of Western science with all its wonderful record before these age-old mysteries of India that had made him first realise that the achievements of the ancient seers of India were far in advance of Western discoveries and inventions. He was firmly convinced that the ancient Rishis had penetrated to the very centre of Truth.

His power of expression is evident to the reader in any page. The diction suits the wide sweep of his outlook. Epigram and paradox he used with telling effect while his similes were remarkably apt and facile. He spoke as he wrote, sentences packed with thought and distinguished with a comprehensive outlook. A very rapid speaker, he was sometimes above the level of ordinary audiences. In private conversation, such forceful expressions were natural and common to him.

From over a decade his heart had been set on the reconstruction of village life. As long ago as 1920, he had a scheme for village reconstruction work; he followed with the greatest avidity

not only the activities of the All-India Spinners' Association but other efforts with a similar objective, *viz.*, the economic surveys of villages, rural work of the Y. M. C. A., etc. The problem was "to help villagers to help themselves", and he was strongly opposed to all such efforts as proceeded from a partial understanding of the situation. He himself intended to set up in his own native place in Malabar, and work up villages. He was always insistent that the maladies ordinarily perceived were but symptoms of a far more serious and many-sided chronic disease. To quote from a lecture of his, wherein he had offered a suggestion for commemorating the Silver Jubilee of His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore: "Rural life revived is national life vitalised. Our peasantry form the backbone of the people, the producing part of it, and any measures that we adopt to set them on their feet, to revive in them the sense of self-respect, their civic consciousness, will be immediately reflected in the prosperity, the strength and vigour of the people as a whole. The energies of 250 millions of the population now lie frozen and inert like the eternal snows of the Himalayas. They have to melt under the sunshine and warmth of a beneficial influence, if our national life, now run almost dry, is to course forward with the sweeping majesty and irresistible force of a mighty river."

This particular book, he was anxious, should be published before the future of the country was settled, *i.e.*, before the Round Table discussions and settlements. He felt that there were aspects

and principles of Indian civilisation and culture which should not be lost sight of or belittled in importance when the future of such a great country was being discussed. While he laid no claim for infallibility, he claimed for his conclusions a scientific value; rightly and even proudly, he could claim that the conclusions reached by him should be ever present before the minds of those who assumed the direction of the country's destiny. There is no doubt that the results reached by a silent scientific thinker amid serene surroundings would amply repay every student, Western or Eastern, of India and her mighty problems.

His friends and acquaintances have much to regret in not having known more of his rich thoughts than they did. It is even possible that some might be surprised and even shocked by the views expressed in the book, which picture often amused him as he was preparing the final manuscript. While young men returned lifted out of their depression after a talk with him, older men could see that he had combined in himself the best of both cultures, Eastern and Western. By birth an Indian, trained to objective science by the West, and turned out of the school of life, travel and experience, he brought to bear a disciplined intellect and a shrewd and delicate understanding on the many burning problems of the Motherland. He was an exception to the batch of foreign-travelled Indians; his journey round the world has borne rich fruit. In India itself, he had visited at considerable sacrifice almost all the great centres. He was planning a journey

to Ajanta and a trip to Kashmere, which two only he had not seen.

He was 47 when he died, an age when the intellect is rich and ripe with experience. The country has been deprived of him just when he was best fitted to serve her in a field where the workers are so few. May be in His eyes, Dr. Kunhikannan has given in his two books, enough to "stimulate others to bestow thought on the subject and to give rise to a literature in India itself from the pen of Indians, which will, if it does not prevent India from being judged unheard, at least prevent educated Indians from accepting interested distortions of Western writers as presenting the true picture of their own Motherland".

PREFACE

I have written the following book because I felt it as a duty, which I owed to my Motherland, to present a true picture of her culture and civilisation. I hope it will serve as much to save her from the contempt and disgrace, which ill-informed or prejudiced writers of the West have drawn upon her, as to restore faith and pride in their own country in those among English-educated Indians who are now so largely influenced in their judgments by the West. The survey has had to cover a wide range of subjects, rendered wider by the political developments of the last few years, but it is hoped that the more extended scope helps to furnish the correct perspective in which the many problems, past and present of India, have to be viewed.

The book was begun four years ago but lack of leisure delayed its completion until August last. For several reasons nearly a year has had to elapse before publication. Although a great deal has happened during the interval, it has been deemed desirable to make no substantial change in the typescript.

The authority of a specialist is not claimed for the views presented in regard to the various aspects of Indian civilisation dealt with. They are of a man who has, by patient study and independent thought, tried to interpret Indian

culture from the standpoint of the conditions of Indian existence and their bearing on the political future of the country.

In the preparation of the book, I have received invaluable help from two of my friends, one intimate and long known to me and the other (Sjt. B. Pattabhisitaramayya Garu) whom I have not met even once, who nevertheless, when requested, found time amidst his most exacting duties to read through the typescript and give me his advice. I am deeply indebted to both.

I hope the book will stimulate my countrymen, more qualified by knowledge, intelligence and experience than I can claim, to attempt similar studies more correct in judgment and less faulty in presentation.

1931. K. KUNHIKANNAN.

TO

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Dominance of Western Authorship

IT is a singular fact, the significance of which is not sufficiently understood, that by far the greatest proportion of the literature on India is of Western authorship. That literature is growing so rapidly in volume in comparison with what is published from the pen of Indian writers that one is inclined to turn almost exclusively to Western sources for the information one requires. In all that pertains to the West, the West itself is the authority and would not accept any other. Every aspect of the West, from its geology and climate to its metaphysics and philosophy, society, culture and civilisation, its Present, Past and Future, has been dealt with exhaustively by the ablest intellects there. Literature on these subjects circulates freely throughout the length and breadth of the West, and helps to focus opinion on the varied problems of progress, and to reveal correct lines of advance.

All honour to the West for the sedulous and efficient discharge of what is a primary and important duty of national advance.

But the West has not remained content with researches in the field of its own civilisation. It has gone beyond its own boundaries to pursue them, with no less enthusiasm, into the rest of the world and has accumulated a literature by no means inconsiderable. No country has perhaps received so much attention as India, my Motherland. She has from the earliest times excited the interest, the imagination and the romantic instincts of the foreigner. Since the days when Fa Hian came to India to visit a country rendered sacred by the birth of Buddha, there has been a succession of travellers, adventurers and refugees, attracted to her hospitable shores by her spirituality, by her wealth, or by the shelter and support she gave to all. And even to-day, when her greatness is more of the past and her magnificent cities are in ruins or lie buried beneath the dust of centuries, she still exercises a fascination on the foreigner. There are palaces, tombs, temples and mosques surviving, whose incomparable beauty of line and form is still worth a visit from afar. Of what once belonged to forgotten empires, there are still left towers and fortresses to enable the visitor to picture in imagination the greatness and splendour that was. In the living present there is so much of sport in the jungle, the exciting shoot of the tiger and the guar and the capture of the wild elephants, so much picturesque scenery in the primeval forests, and

Indian Attractions

more than all this, there is so much of absorbing interest in human life itself, in its astonishing variety, that it takes away the breath of the foreigner, accustomed to see life at home reduced to a level of far greater monotony. Every variety of civilisation, every stage of it from tribal to communal and individual, every form of religious thought and belief, from worship of animals and stones, from sacrifices and mutilations to abstract contemplation of the Divine, is to be seen among the 350 millions of India. India is a world by herself and a world apart.

These features offer attractions to tourists, historians, sportsmen and scientists which can hardly be equalled in any other part of the World. Added to these interests, there is to the Britisher the interest of government and exploitation which requires a close study of India from the standpoint of the Indian as well as of his own. The interests and habits of the rulers, complex in themselves, have to be studied in their relation to the interests of the ruled to reduce their mutual opposition. There is no detail, however insignificant, in the vast complex of the Indian world, which may be left unnoticed, if policies have to be framed and possible collisions avoided. The task is beyond the capacity of the individual; many minds study India as a field of investment and enterprise; many times that number study India as a problem.

British Interest

A new class of writers has come into prominence of late years, who seek to further the object of Western dominance but by different methods. They are afraid of the growing strength

of the national movement and of the sympathy it may secure from the more democratically inclined of Western countries. In their hasty cruises across the ocean of Indian humanity, they observe the muck and debris that float on the surface but fail to contemplate the beauty and the serenity of the sentient life, blossoming in the depths below, trailing tassels of tremulous tentacles in the silence of the ocean bed, a fairy land that vanishes before the disturbance of the thoughtless intruder. They present to their countrymen accounts which satisfy so much the craving for sensationalism, feed so much the vanity and self-sufficiency of the West, that they become popular and help in no small degree to dry up the springs of Western sympathy.

Recent Literature

These are the many sources whence proceed the vast stream of foreign literature about India, bearing on every aspect of Indian life, from her geology and climate to her humanity, and her conception of the life beyond the grave. There is no science or art whose resources are not utilised, or to which contributions are not made in the study. Every aspect of life and activity is studied in its mutual relation to other aspects, and to the necessities and requirements of the ruling power. The significance of new developments has to be considered, alignments of policy indicated, doubts and hesitations on the part of the administrators removed and their hands strengthened, and gathering discontent has to be dissipated by judicious sermons on the failings of the people. In all these matters, the West is speaking not for itself but for others, who are not only alien to

her in thought and feeling, but whose interests are opposed to its own. Any literature from so tainted a source must be suspect, and it is that literature which is allowed to be almost in exclusive possession of the field in India to-day to the discomfiture and humiliation of the Indians. The Indian point of view in regard to what relates to India has been so rarely presented, that it almost lies obscured, unrecognised and neglected. The book of Abbe Dubois or of William Archer or of Miss Mayo is published and a wave of indignation passes over the country, but an authoritative account of India, which will help the public to judge and decide better, has yet to come from the pen of Indian writers. So indifferent now are they to a duty so obvious, that it required an Englishman to write a book in defence of India against the attack of Archer.

Propagandist in character

The effect, on the West itself, of the circulation of such a literature, it is not difficult to perceive. It helps to confirm a natural inclination to contempt, born of a sense of superiority and flattering to it. The conscience of the West, more especially of England, naturally weak and accommodating in regard to the effects of alien rule because so much of its interests are involved, is roused with great difficulty when the domination tends to speed up the dissolution of what is represented to it as a decayed and washed-out civilisation, semi-barbarous at its best and clearly unsuited to modern conditions. Not even the jealousy of England, on account of her commanding position, so natural to close rivals such as

Its effect on the West

Germany or the United States or France, finds in the one-sided representation of India as a half civilised people, any cause for their sympathy with them. It is foolish to expect any help from these countries in the political advance of India. But there are many Indians scattered over the colonies, and their situation amidst alien surroundings, bad in all conscience, is likely to get worse, as American and colonial opinion hardens against the civilisation to which they belong.

On the Empire

Nor would the process of transformation of a piebald empire into a Commonwealth be facilitated. Outside the ranks of a few extremists no Indian demands the severance of the imperial connection. No tie is unwelcome to Indians which does not involve impoverishment or debasement of the people or any hindrance to their self-expression. The closer association between the members of the Commonwealth, without which no enduring and fruitful connection can be established, would become impossible as a result of this persistent and unscrupulous propaganda.

On Educated Indians

But what is graver and of far greater moment is the effect on India herself. The couple of millions of 'English educated' have had, as a result of a denationalising education, the respect for the civilisation and culture of their own motherland destroyed for the greater part. The evidence of the superiority of Western civilisation is borne in upon them from so many directions—the political superiority of the English, their higher standard of life, their efficiency as rulers of the country, the

facilities of travel and communication, their achievements in every branch of science, the splendour and range of their literature, and at the same time, so effectively has the value of their own culture and civilisation been screened from them during the course of their education, that the critical spirit born of Western education has not half a chance against effects so overpowering. A good many of them are, as Lord Macaulay wanted them to be, 'a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect'.

Too many succumb to these influences. Of the rest, a great number welcome the process of Westernisation as necessary, or reconcile themselves to it as inevitable; a few survive and look upon the decay of Indian civilisation as leading to inevitable ruin. The whole intellectual armoury of the West is, however, against these latter, and Westernised Indians join forces with the Europeans in a common onslaught against what they consider to be a wild and preposterous idea.

On the educated class nevertheless must necessarily devolve the responsibility of guiding the new forces that have sprung into being in the bosom of the people. The discharge of that responsibility is by no means facilitated by the conflicts of opinions and standards pervading every phase of Indian life and activity. They have been themselves subject in recent years to a reaction from Westernization, which has landed them in varying stages of disillusionment, and made for doubts and hesitations so disastrous to sustained effort.

Nor are the varied interests easily reconciled in any new alignment of national policy. The conflict of opinion is not perhaps so pronounced in regard to a demand for a change in Government. Except for those who fear that the scales, now held more or less in their favour by the British, may turn against them the moment Government passes into the hands of the Indians, and those others whose present status and dignities are gifts from the British—and these form by no means an inconsiderable section of the people—there is great unanimity of feeling in respect of the political demand. In spite of a consensus of opinion, however, there is yet no clear perspective of the issues involved. The variety of causes that have been at work to create a demand for a change in Government, the unrest proceeding from economic distress, the irritation at the thoughtless exhibitions of racial arrogance on the part of the rulers of the country, the growing self-respect of the educated and their truncated lives, would indicate that the movement, such as it is, is not so much for a *democratic* as a *national* Government. Sentiments, habits and interests of all but the English educated portion and even of these last, by no means a negligible number, do not square with the demand for a democratic form of Government. There is indeed no social theory or economic doctrine, exhibited or understood by the people, on which a democratic machinery may be set up. Far too many labour under the impression that forms of Government have little to do with the structure of society, its ideals and aspirations.

Objective of Unrest

There is indeed a section, fortunately or unfortunately small, who recognise the incompatibilities of the material and apparatus, but who believe that once Self-Government is set up in the country, what is inconsistent or obstructive may or can be modified to suit its operations. They fail to contemplate the possibility of a reverse process on the mechanism, which may render it unsuitable for performing those very operations which they trust it will execute with ease. They seem oblivious of the truth that Government and the people must act and react, each on the other, and the one-sided process which they contemplate is impossible.

A Delusion

The bulk of the people, even among the educated, have bestowed no thought on the possible effects of democratic Government on the civilisation, the ideals and habits which they hold sacred. Beyond relief from the economic distress affecting them, a more considerate attitude on the part of the foreigners in the country and release from the crushing weight of officialdom, they expect little to follow from the grant of Self-Government. Did they by any possibility imagine that the culture and civilisation and the social order threaten to be altered beyond recognition, there could not be the least doubt that they would rise with one voice against a demand so revolutionary in its effects.

The intelligentsia may rightly claim that, a minority though they are, their acquaintance with modern conditions and their own education entitle them to leadership in the political progress of India, and that they are entitled to fashion that progress to

the best of their ability and acćording to their best judgment. That is a claim that requires examination. The forward movement in politics in any country in the World has been initiated and guided by a minority. The smallness of their numbers is not therefore against them. But they have been alienated in no small measure in thought and feeling from the main body of the people, and to that extent would not be trusted as custodians of progress in harmony with the ideas of the majority of the people. They remain still a class who think that Indian civilisation may be adapted to modern conditions, or so much of Western civilisation absorbed as to give it the requisite vitality. This facile formula, so alluringly simple and repeated invariably in connection with every discussion of Indian progress, but barely conceals the shallowness of thought from which it springs. For any policy of adaptation, the first condition is a thorough grasp of the fundamental principles, and no one is agreed as to what the governing principles of Indian civilisation are. And in the prevailing disagreement and doubt the task of adaptation has therefore no meaning.

The Intelligentsia

Start then from whichever direction we may, it is not long before we come upon the nature and identity of Indian civilisation as the very crux of the problem. What it is and what it stands for has to be determined, before its worth and value to the people nurtured by it in the changed conditions can be ascertained. Outlines of its identity have therefore to be discovered, before we can decide how far it may be adapted or refined to suit modern conditions

or whether its supersession by Western civilisation is the best way. The task is of the greatest difficulty. Indian civilisation, as it exists to-day, represents no natural or healthy growth, continuous and self-directed from a historical past. The shocks of successive invasions of the country, the stresses and strains of foreign rule on vital points least able to bear them have made for developments which are unnatural in certain directions, suppressed others which were normal, and have so tortured it out of shape that the lines of correct and true identity are discerned with the greatest difficulty. The prepossessions of Western theories, far from being helpful, add considerably to the difficulty. Political theories in regard to human society are of Western creation, largely derived from experience of Western forms of Government, and have for their background the conditions and outlook of life there. They are with difficulty applied to sets of conditions which were ignored by or were unfamiliar to their authors, and yet, being the only ones in the field, they are applied without hesitation. Ideas and associations that cluster round them remain in respect of institutions Indian, where they are wholly out of place. These pitfalls in the use of Western phrases and formulæ have to be guarded against at every turn for any correct analysis of Indian political phenomena.

The Crux of the Problem

Once the essential principles of Hindu civilisation are discerned, a comparison with Western civilisation in the light of fundamental Indian conditions would reveal lines along which India should progress. In

that comparison, we have to put away all thought of inferiority or superiority of civilisations, and view them as but fundamental racial reactions to different environments, refined in the process of time out of their cruder adjustments, and facilitating more and more, subject to universal laws of humanity, the full and correct expression of the virtues peculiar to each civilisation.

The determination of the essential features of Hindu civilisation would help further to define the attitude it should adopt towards its sister culture to which 77 million Indians now belong. If India is to advance nationally and politically, the fissure between the two communities that appears to cut deep into centuries cannot be ignored. We have to explore the possibility of a fusion of these cultures, failing which we have to determine how the two communities may be welded together for joint action in national affairs without sacrifice by each of its distinct identity.

Its Facets

We have next to reckon with the position of the Indian Princes and the 81 millions under their rule. In no consideration of Indian unity or self-Government, may the Indian Princes be treated as isolated units. Indian unity is unthinkable with the Indian States left out. In all matters affecting India as a whole their voice has to be heard and respected. In any scheme of Indian advance, the Princes as well as their peoples have to play their part, and no Government that fails to provide the machinery for the effective expression of their wills in All-India matters can guarantee peace or security to the country. The Indian States are in varying stages of political

evolution, some of them little removed from tribal despotisms, others highly advanced; nor are their relations with the Central Government of a uniform character which would easily yield a common formula of political relationship.

The many millions of untouchables constitute for the most part even now a dark continent into which the Missionary alone ventured for many decades. The higher classes have but recently followed his lead, and have yet to work out a programme of uplift supported by religious conviction and social theory. In a Self-Governing India there should be due safeguards against their reversion to the degradation and helplessness from which the Missionary tried to uplift them.

Hindu and Muhammadan, Christian and Parsi, Brahmin and Pariah, prince and peasant, the rich and the poor, no one may be left out of account in a policy of national consolidation and progress. A formula has to be devised that will be acceptable to all and rouse the enthusiasm of all, under the spell of which each will contribute the best that is in him, and which will rouse, on the one hand, from the more progressive the energies required and, on the other, will enable the more conservative element to be used as a steadying influence that will prevent dangerous explosions of the new national temper.

One sought in vain till the other day in the literature on Indian nationalism for a formula so potent, so wide in its scope. Economic distress affected the poor. They formed a large part of the people; but they were ignorant and inert. The rich were unaffected. The English educated classes felt

deeply the humiliation of subjection, but they had little social influence and they were but 2 millions. There was growing alienation between Hindus and Muhammadans, between the upper and lower strata, and between the rulers and the ruled. There was growing poverty, and the moral fibre of the people was weakening. These were obstacles which appeared insuperable.

A Modern Miracle

But the miracle has been wrought. What seemed impossible but a decade ago has happened. The leader has arisen, who is rapidly uniting into one compact power peoples and communities in all stages and on divergent lines of evolution. He has made nationalism a practical and intelligible creed to the masses, physically and morally prostrate by the subjection of centuries. He is fast making it the one principle of action of their lives. The impulse taking birth in him has fired multitudes and transformed their commonplace virtues into deeds of national heroism. Even the growing resentment against the British rule has by the magic of his influence been made to elevate and strengthen character instead of spending itself in futile outbursts. Whether conciliated or obstructed, Indian nationalism is bound to deepen and spread.

But nationalism will have but traversed a part of the way on the attainment of freedom from foreign domination. The graver problems would arise after the withdrawal of Britain from the government of the country. In India the question is not the descent of political power from the upper to the lower strata of a homogeneous people but its transfer from a foreign

race, hitherto in domination, to a people of very varied composition hitherto held in subjection. What is required is more a horizontal than a vertical distribution of power. When that is effected and the various communities have been welded together into a political whole, there would still remain the question how the new found liberties are to be used with reference to Indian culture and civilisation. Is nationalism a demand for, or a protest against Westernisation? Is the national Government to speed up, or arrest the dissolution of Indian cultures? What form is the national Government to take? Will an aristocratic culture like that of the Hindus, or a theocracy like that of Islam, square with a democratic form of Government?

Further Problems Staggering

The mind staggers before problems such as these, but there ought to be no wavering, no staggering, for solved they must be, and solved by the efforts of the best intellects in the country. The writer lays no claim whatever to an ability to scale the heights that, rising one behind the other in limitless succession, lead up to the sky. But he views with grave misgivings the effects of the writings of the West in regard to India, most of them contemptuous or prejudiced, which, far from being helpful, tend to obscure or confound the issues for many thousands of his countrymen, and lower their motherland in their eyes and in the eyes of the World. Indians have therefore to interpret India for themselves and for the World. It is that reflection that has nerved the writer to an endeavour which he knows is beyond him. Perhaps

Purpose of the Author

it may serve to stimulate others to bestow thought on the subject and give rise to a literature in India itself from the pen of Indians, which will, if it does not prevent India being judged unheard, at least prevent educated Indians from accepting interested distortions of Western writers as representing the true picture of their own motherland, and what is more vital to the welfare of the country, enable them to discern more clearly the correct lines on which she has to advance.

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2. THE BACKGROUND

Magnitude of the Country—Racial Diversity—Geographical Unity—An Instructive Contrast—Fertility—Climate, Its Discipline, Instances—Importance of Fundamental Facts.

THERE are certain fundamental facts of Indian existence which have to serve as a background in considering almost every problem of Indian progress. They are often forgotten or ignored, if remembered, so much so that the discussion of Indian questions has suffered from the failure to give them due subordination to the basic facts of Indian existence. The first of these is the extent of the country. India is spoken of as a country much as any country in Europe, such as Italy or France or England or even Greece, Holland or Denmark. Except Russia, however, not one of the countries of Europe is bigger than an Indian province, and the smaller countries like Holland or Switzerland are little larger than an Indian District in charge of a Collector. One night spent in a railway train would take one across France or England or along the whole length of Italy. It is but a few hours' sail from London to Amsterdam, and a few more to Christiania. Compare it with a journey of four or five days in India required for traversing the length of the country and then one realises that India is no country but a continent. From the Indus in the west to the Brahmaputra in the east it is more

Magnitude of the Country

than 1,800 miles wide, from Kashmir in the north to Cape Comorin in the south it is again as many miles long.

It is a size less than that of the United States which is bigger by two-thirds, and of Australia which is nearly as large. But both countries have populations far less numerous than that of India. Against the 350 millions of India there are but 122 in the States and a bare 6 million in the Island continent. To correspond to India in point of density of population, the United States must have no less than 530 and Australia 510 millions.

A population so numerous as one-fifth of the entire human race must be necessarily varied in racial composition. Racial homogeneity has not been achieved even in small countries of Europe. There, no less than two or three racial elements may go into the composition of the population; as for example in Britain. In France there is an equal number, in Germany besides the Teutons there are the Slavs, in Hungary there are the Magyars besides the Teutonic Hungarians. Even in the colonies no more than a couple of hundred years old, racial uniformity does not exist except perhaps among the six millions of Australians, and a million and a half New Zealanders, where however, it is for the most part due to ruthless extermination or the gradual extinction of indigenous races. Of the 122 millions in the United States 12 millions are Negroes, or of Negro extraction. More than 12 million are German and there are a considerable number of Jews, Italians and representatives of practically every country

Racial Diversity

in Europe, besides the Red Indians. In Canada very nearly three millions are French. The whole of the province of Quebec is their special field, and there are but ten millions of settlers in the whole of Canada. In South Africa there are the Dutch as well as the English settlers, and no fusion has yet taken place, or is likely to take place. And there are, besides these, about 5 million Negroes and about a quarter of a million of South African Indians. In the face of the racial features of these countries, it is not surprising that the 350 millions of Indians in India are of varied composition.

The third feature is the configuration of the country which, as will be seen, has important political consequences. Continent as it is, India is a region in itself, marked out from the rest of Asia, by the largest mountain chains in the world, the Himalayas, and offering few inlets to the country to the invader. The famous passes of the Khaiber and Bolan are more easily penetrated than defended. The Khaiber pass is a narrow gorge for about 30 miles of its route leading from Kabul to Peshawar, and the rest of the pass lies through very difficult mountain valleys. Within the country itself, however, there are few obstacles to the invader. From the Indus to the Brahmaputra in the north, the country is one continuous plain, less than 500 feet above the sea level, with scarce an obstruction worth considering, and made up of the fine silt deposited by the Himalayan rivers. The whole of the peninsular portion of India south of this low land is a plateau varying from two to three thousand feet above the

level of the sea, bounded on the west by the precipitous steeps of the Western Ghats, and on the east by the less continuous and less elevated hills of the Eastern Ghats. There is no continuous chain of mountains to shut the plateau off from the Indo-Gangetic plain. As a matter of fact, the Aravalli hills carry it as far as the gate of Delhi, and while easy communication from east to west to the south of this gate is rendered impossible by this extension, the passage to the south from the north is facilitated. Neither the Vindhya nor the Satpuras reach anywhere near the east coast of the peninsula. Practically therefore, as far as Cape Comorin, the country is one and indivisible geographically. What the Western Ghats shut off from the rest of India is but a narrow strip, never at its greatest breadth more than 50 miles, and on the east, there are numerous points of entry from the coast to the plateau, and beyond, to the north.

Geographical Unity

These facts bring out strongly the geographic unity of India. None of the mountains in India are long enough to isolate one tract from another. The Western Ghats are the only exception, but what they isolate is but a long narrow strip as already stated, and even along them there are gaps more or less affording easy access, notably the Palghat Gap, where the mountain chain sinks to the level of only a thousand feet above the level of the sea. The rest of the country cannot be said to be divided into any well-defined regions characterised by difficulty of access from the presence of mountain chains or impassable rivers or deserts, or isolated by regions

such as swamps. The contrast which Europe presents to India in this respect is striking and instructive.

Great Britain and Ireland are islands "united by the ocean, separated by the sea". Spain is cut off from France by the Pyranees; Italy from the north by the Alps; Norway and Sweden are separated by the Kielen; Austria-Hungary has the Carpathians, while Switzerland is ringed all round by the Alps. Greece has in the north the Corinthian mountains. This differentiation of Europe into isolated tracts, more or less inaccessible, and therefore sheltered from easy penetration, made for a congeries of nations. They prevented admixtures and infusions in the population which racial contacts bring in their train. In India, on the other hand, there was no serious hindrance to the movement of peoples and communities from one end of the country to the other; nothing to prevent them from settling down in close proximity to others of a different race or religion and to bringing them together in mutual association. This has, as will be seen, important bearings on the course of Indian History.

An Instructive Contrast

The fourth important feature is the character of the soil and its bearing on rural economics. The Gangetic plain is, as has been said, made up of the fine alluvium deposited annually by the Himalayan rivers. The soil thus formed is among the most fertile in the World. The plateau consists, for the most part, of the fine red soil, and the so-called black cotton soil, which is no less fertile. In most parts of the

Fertility

country no less than two crops may be raised during the year, and the warmth of the sun facilitates renewal of the soil so rapidly as to render the long rotations of the West unnecessary in India. The heat of the sun speeds up plant growth, and the period required to reach maturity is much less in India than in Europe for the same kind of crop. The sugarcane that takes a year and a half in a subtropical island like Hawaii for reaching maturity requires in India not more than 10 or 11 months. The net result is that, acre for acre, India will grow more in a given time than Europe, and with far less exertion. The deep ploughing which exposes the soil to the beneficial action of the sun is not required in India in the same degree, nor is manual exertion demanded to the same extent.

Climate

The fifth and the last to be mentioned is the climate. What may be called a cool climate in India exists only in a few districts above 5,000 feet level of the sea, such as Kashmir, Simla, Darjeeling and other hill stations. In the rest of India the climate is more or less tropical. Peninsular India alone is within the Tropics; the north is beyond the Tropic of Cancer, but as the former is a plateau and the latter is a level plain, these differences in temperature are somewhat equalised. The most characteristic feature in the Indian climate is the monsoon which follows the hot season when everything tends to dry up. The temperature during the latter season ranges usually from 100 to as high as 182 degrees F.H. Heat by itself is not half so enervating as heat accompanied by moisture. On the Arab, compelled to struggle for existence in

the dry desert of Arabia and often to make long journeys in the scorching heat of the sun, the effect has been to produce a hardy constitution. But, when heat is accompanied by humidity, the effect is almost the reverse. In the Gangetic plain the heavy rains of the monsoon, the poor drainage resulting from the excessively slow fall in the land towards the sea, and a highly retentive soil conspire to produce what has been described as a Turkish bath. In the plateau of Rajputana, the Punjab and parts of Bombay the climate is drier. In the south the climate is "hot for three months and for the rest of the year hotter".

Its Discipline

These differences are marked in the peoples that inhabit the tracts. The most sturdy sections of the peoples are in the dry deserts of Rajputana and colder regions of the Punjab, Kashmir, Nepal, while the most anæmic and emotional are in steamy Bengal. The comparatively dry tracts of the Konkan have developed the hardier Maratha. The more virile Sikhs took their origin in the North, while in the South the more philosophical developments of later Hinduism had their origin. The final overthrow of Buddhism and the re-establishment of Hinduism on a secure footing, was the work of Brahmin reformers of the South.

The physiological effects of humid heat have been described by R. C. Ward in his book on 'Climate':

'The uniformly high temperature of the tropics especially combined with high humidity and the characteristically small variability of temperature have certain well-established physiological effects. Among these the following are commonly

noted: increased respiration, decreased pulse action, profuse perspiration, lesser activity of the stomach and intestines, tendency to digestive disorders, depreciation of bodily and mental activity, enervation, indifference, disinclination to exertion, in fact a general ill-defined condition of debility, increased inactivity of the liver and surexcitation of the kidneys. In heat evaporation is slight. Blood becomes more dilute, there is deficiency in the number of red corpuscles in consequence of the diminished proportion of oxygen in the heart; there is less power to do work, greater fatigue from work; lower vitality, all these render the body less liable to resist disease and an anæmic condition is most widespread in the tropics.'

The more detailed effects of climate on man have not yet been fully ascertained, but the researches so far made have yielded results of considerable interest. In the tropics man requires only 66 to 70 per cent. of the muscle-forming constituent of food, *viz.*, proteid required in the West. There are other differences in food brought on by the different calorific requirements of cold and hot countries, and these have resulted again in important differences in the composition of blood and urine, as indicated in the Tables below, taken from Mukerjee's 'Principles of Comparative Economics'.

I. BLOOD

COMPONENTS	EUROPEANS	BENGALIS
Red corpuscles ..	5 millions.	5½ millions.
White ..	8,000 ,,	9,000 ,,
Hæmoglobin ..	100 per cent.	80 to 90 per cent.
Specific gravity ..	1,057.	1,058.
Proteid ..	19 per cent.	18 per cent.
Total solids ..	21 per cent.	20 per cent.
Salts ..	0·78 per cent.	1·06 per cent.
Chloride in serum ..	0·55 per cent.	0·72 per cent.
Coagulation ..	4 minutes.	2 minutes.
Blood pressure ..	115-130 m.m.	110-115 m.m.

II. URINE

COMPONENTS		EUROPEANS	BENGALIS
Quantity	..	1,440 c.c.	1,200 c.c.
Specific gravity	..	1,020.	1,013.
Urea	..	35 g.m.	13 g.m.
Nitrogen	..	18 ,,	6 ,,
Chlorides	..	15 ,,	10 ,,
Phosphates	..	3·5 ,,	0·918 ,,
Uric acid	..	0·75 ,,	0·452 ,,
Sulphates	..	2·5 ,,	1·880 ,,

Apart from differences in diet and its consequences, there are others on the physical frame which are but slowly coming to be realised. The physical characteristics of the races of mankind are being traced back to climate. The purposes, which the pigment of the skin serves, are too well known to be detailed here. The intensive heat of Africa has brought the skin circulation of the negro nearer the surface, and enlarged the sweat pores to enable more rapid evaporation. For a similar reason, he has the swollen red lips and open mouth. On the other hand, of the inhabitant of Central Europe which has very cold winters, the skin circulation is deeper and the complexion is therefore a pale white. The flesh diet of Europe has made for stronger development of the jaw muscles, and their weight and attachment has had no small influence on the shape of the European skull.

The contrast in point of climate between Europe and India was borne in upon me with striking effect, when going into the Park in Paris at noon on the day of my arrival in June. I saw tennis being played with zest on several courts. Except

perhaps in hill stations in India, at that time of the year, no one will dare to have a set. Other evidences no less striking brought home to me the difference. Nor was the difference to be noted in myself any the less. Except perhaps a couple of hours spent at meals taken at restaurants, I was on my legs from 7 in the morning to sometimes 11 in the night; and little accustomed as I was to walk in India, my legs never wearied. I ate oftener and more substantial foods. I slept not more than 5 or 6 hours, often less, and I had almost double the amount of substantial reading. Generally I worked under higher pressure, and did not feel worse. It was possible, however, I made insufficient allowances for the stimulus of surroundings which were novel and unfamiliar, and the effect of the increased velocity with which things moved in the West. I had not an opportunity to stay sufficiently long to eliminate these effects, but I made enquiries of my own countrymen who had stayed long in the country, and they were unanimous in praising the effects of the climate. Indeed, the striking contrasts of the season—a cold winter, when life is spent indoors for the most part followed by a spring when trees burst into blossoms, and all sentient things beat with the vigorous pulsations of a new life and predisposition to bodily exertion for the sake of the warmth so welcome in a cold climate, are the factors in what has been called the climatic discipline. The tendency of the Indian climate is to adapt man to work which is slow, steady and leisurely, and not of the kind that demands intensive effort, for the latter produces perspiration which is inconvenient

and vexatious, especially when it is not easily evaporated as in humid climates.

Instances

Climatic effects may be noticed not only on man, but on the produce of the soil also. It has been established that wheat produced in cold climates has a larger proteid content than the same cereal grown in the tropics. The slower growth of the plants in cold climates must necessarily make for the differences in quality. The silk worm that produces only one brood in Europe tends to have several broods in India, and with that disposition there is a tendency to gradual degeneration both in the size of the worm, and the quality as well as the quantity of the silk it produces. In regard to other animals and plants, what is true of wheat and the silk worm must apply, and climate will be found to produce more or less similar effects, even though in the case of these latter they have not yet been investigated and determined with accuracy.

These are the *fundamental facts* in regard to India which are of the greatest importance, but which nevertheless are lost sight of in considerations connected with India. The European, of all races, has had the closest acquaintances with the various parts of the World. He has travelled, conquered and settled in many of these, and yet in his hasty judgments of alien civilisations, he has little thought of climates and their effects. He would seek refuge in the hills from the heat of the plains in India and would, at the price of long separation, avoid for his wife and children the disastrous effect of the climate, but has seldom the breadth of vision to see in the enfeebled frame of the native, whose failure to keep

up to the standards of his efficiency he condemns so much, the cumulative effect of successive generations of tropical heat. Nor will the Indian, eager to prove his fitness for things Western, compromise his position by the admission that his fund of physical energy is not equal to that of the European. The continental character of the country pressed into service with eagerness in every political argument against Indian Self-Government is conveniently forgotten when Hinduism is described as a miscellany of creeds and the people as a medley of races, whereas that one fact would have sufficed for all the explanations required, and deprived the criticism of its point. The misuse of these facts renders it more necessary to detail their effects accurately and at the right place. Science has not progressed sufficiently far to eliminate from man the effects of the larger forces of nature which constitute his environment. Temperature and humidity are beyond scientific control. Mountain barriers cannot be created to order, to isolate tracts and make them the nurseries of nations. Nor are the features of India on the narrow scale of a mere country. A people may surrender to them at the risk of their vitality and enterprise, but they may also so organise or order their lives, that what is lacking in the environment may be made good by the sacrificing of things less vital to progress. Thus does a civilisation get its title. What effects Indian environment tends to produce on the inhabitants, and how far the more adverse of these have been eliminated or neutralised, and what further adjustments are necessary, it will be the purpose of subsequent chapters to reveal.

Importance of Fundamental Facts

3. THE JOINT FAMILY

Charges Commonly Levelled—Foreigner's Angle of Vision—Its True Origin—Abundant Land—Simplicity of Life—Problem of Labour—Effect on the Family—Parallels Elsewhere—Ancestral Worship—Corporate Life and Equality—Among Women—Mutual Adjustment—Humanising Influence—Its Disintegration—Assisted by a Modern Administration—Charges Considered—Status Afforded—Enterprise Encouraged—Fragmentation under New Conditions—Its Real Weakness—The Future—Absence of a Poor Law.

IN common with other features of Hindu civilisation the Joint family has been condemned by practically every observer from the West. According to them it is a nursery for idlers, for the assured prospect of sharing the wealth produced by the more enterprising members of the family would tend to take away the stimulus to similar endeavours from those that come after them. At its door is laid the excessive sub-division of property and fragmentation of land into holdings of uneconomic size, making for a considerable wastage of productive effort. The third charge, which follows from the second, is that the litigious habit of the people is directly due to it. A fourth is that the obligation on the individual to share his earnings with members of his family prevents the accumulation of capital, and therefore, of large scale enterprise.

Charges Commonly Levelled

Each of these criticisms, it need hardly be said, is based on extremely shallow observations. The misconceptions are natural to people who have grown under systems in many respects the opposite of the Joint family. The various incidents of the Indian Joint family are comprehended with difficulty by those who look upon the support of aged parents or less favourably circumstanced brothers or sisters in distress, not as a religious or moral obligation but as a favour not ordinarily to be expected of them. Nor is there anything in the growth of property in the West to enlarge and elevate family obligations. The Roman idea of property, as a right more than a responsibility and as individualistic, was fatal to the extension of the family circle beyond the man, his wife and children. The law of primogeniture, beneficial as it is in several of its effects on society, is neither equitable nor fair, and what has superseded it among the ordinary peoples in the West is no more generous than a title bestowing a share in the property of the deceased on the wife and, in a lesser degree, on her children; familiar only with these forms of inheritance, they naturally miss the underlying principle of the Joint family, and condemn the institution for the evils which proceed from it to-day as a result of altered conditions.

Foreigner's Angle of Vision

Accustomed to set up a separate house on marriage, and allowed to live as high a standard of life as they can without reference to the needs of parents, brothers, or sisters, and never subject to the necessity of sharing a common life with them, they

are unable to visualise the delicacy of adjustments required in a Joint family and the subordination of individual inclinations and wishes to the requirements of a corporate life, and their hasty judgment is accepted as correct.

But the Joint family had a purpose to serve. Its roots lie deep in the necessities of Indian life. To understand why this singular institution has taken its rise in India and remains the most striking feature of her civilisation, one has to understand a little of Indian rural economics. The fertility of the soil and its generous response to treatment has already been dwelt upon. It is not perhaps what it was in the now more or less exhausted soils of the country, but we have to go back to the early days of India when soils were virgin, and then consider the abundant return they gave in spite of the indifferent treatment bestowed upon them. The cultivation to this day by no means fully occupies a farmer and his family, tilling with their own hands. The implements used are of the simplest description, usually made free of charge by the village carpenter and blacksmith. The costliest item is a pair of bullocks, and even now a fairly good pair can be had for about 200 rupees. But there were in the past, and there are still, a large number of poorer farmers who hire bullocks for ploughing their lands. The land which is now difficult to obtain was in abundance then, and even now land can be had at Rs. 10 per acre in dry land tracts. In ancient days land was in abundance and became the property of those who cut the jungle first.

Its True Origin

Abundant Land

The simplicity of life is the next feature to be considered. The climate is such that but a few of the requirements, which colder climate demands, have to be met. The heat and humidity make life in the open not only desirable but welcome. Shelter against the cold and the penetrating winds of the winter is not required in the same degree, nor is a fireside necessary. The dress has to be the simplest in most parts of the country to make the effects of climate less disconcerting. There is less rapid loss of the heat of the body, for the difference between the temperature of the body and of the surroundings is much less, and food of high calorific value is not required. Meat is far less a necessity than in the West, and is harmful if not taken in moderation. Alcoholic drinks heat up the body further, where the flow of heat is not from the body to the surroundings as in the West, but the other way about. The result is that a very simple standard of life is all that is required. Under the general indisposition to bodily exertion on account of the inconvenience of the perspiration that follows and its irksomeness under high temperature, the tendency is towards lower rather than higher standards of efficiency. The abundance of nature conspires towards the same end.

Simplicity of Life

Under the stress of these conditions the supply of labour became precarious. If the labourer was ill paid, all that was necessary for him was to set up as a cultivator himself, for which little capital was required. If, on the other hand, he was paid high wages, the inducement to independent cultivation was even greater from the certainty of a surplus

accumulating from wages, that would suffice as capital. In all climates with an abundance of virgin soil, no matter how difficult and costly independent cultivation is, the deficiency of labour is a feature of early rural economy. It has been the experience of capitalists in America and Australia that labourers, taken out on contract to serve on their huge estates, deserted and scattered very soon after they arrived to set up life as independent farmers. Abundance of nature and a simple life must have made the problem of hired labour in early India far more difficult. This had no small share in the formation of castes. But this effect will be dealt with later.

Problem of Labour

For the present the reaction on the family alone will be considered. The only labour on which the cultivator could rely was that of his sons and the rest of his family. The extent of the land depended on the number of members in the family able to work. The greater the number, the greater the extent of the farm, and the larger the farm, the greater the surplus and the prosperity. The ascent of the social ladder was determined by the size of the property. The system of inheritance, under which on the death of the father property was divided among the sons, would have operated as a serious set back. For the same difficulties which the farmer had to face in building up a large property would have to be encountered more or less by the sons as well, and the climb up to social position would have had to be made over again by each of the sons. The law of primogeniture was and even now is less suited to these circumstances; for on the younger sons

leaving the estate to start farming or trade on their own account, the eldest son would have found the property beyond his capacity to cultivate. A Joint family, on the other hand, in which the sons helped to till and continued the cultivation of the father's property jointly, would under normal conditions not only strengthen but improve their position both in point of status and wealth ; for the joint work would have effected several economies in labour, in capital outlay, and in the farm equipment. The expenses of setting up separate houses is also saved. Additions to the size of the farm would have followed and the ancestral home would have gradually increased in dimensions, and wealth increased and the family multiplied.

Effect on the Family

The development of the Joint family was then naturally a necessary result of the conditions of Indian life. It may be stated that it is by no means confined to India. It exists in China, though in a slightly modified form. Even in Austria in Europe, in parts of the country where labour is difficult to obtain, the members of the family do not separate on the death of the father. They continue to cultivate jointly because labour cannot be had or is dear.

Parallels Elsewhere

Economic in origin as the Indian Joint family is, the economic bond was not what kept the members in co-partnership. Economic motive could not be allowed to remain long in the foreground without giving rise to the forces of self-interest. What kept the family together was ancestral worship, and

Ancestral Worship

the worship of the family deity, and the numerous ceremonies connected with these in which all the members had to take part.

This elevated it from the cruder motives of individual gain and independent living. The association in one household of married couples, parents, and grand-parents tends to soften the angularities of temperament and habit. Of collisions of temper and habit, of jealousies and suspicions, there ought to be no occasion in the household. The elder members will moderate the impetuosity of the younger, and the patience and experience and the wider perspectives of the elder would limit the youthful enthusiasms and indiscretions of the younger and prevent much of their cruder manifestations. There is restraint right through the household, the restraint from word or deed that might cause offence or pain. There is respect for the elders, tenderness for the sick and maimed. Within there is an underlying spirit of equality which demands equal share in income, as well as in feasts and festivities, irrespective of age and infirmity. The husband who fancied a *saree* for his wife would not dream of denying the present of a similar kind to his sisters-in-law. The child of one cannot have ornaments bestowed on it that a child of a similar age of the brother or sister has to go without. What is good for one is good for all. No special favour is allowed to be shown by any mother to her children which may not be shared by other children in the household.

Corporate Life and Equality

As the male members take counsel with the father, so the women look to the mother or grandmother in all matters connected with the observance of custom in charity, in feeding dependants, and in every other matter, which is the special field of the womenfolk. The mother's special concern is the health and happiness of her married daughters. By her attention and help she tries to make up for the deficiencies in life of the less fortunately married among them. If one is sickly and cannot stand the strain of work in her husband's household, she is brought home frequently for a change and rest; if she is poor, the mother usually finds money to help her in her difficulties—and mothers, be it remembered, have several opportunities for laying by money saved out of household expenditure. If she has no ornament, the mother parts with some of her own. To redress in these ways, and so far as in her power lies, the inequality inevitable among daughters married to different families, is her first concern. The sons, their wives and children take a secondary place in her thoughts. Among these, as among her daughters, the first place in her thoughts is for the less fortunate and the less happy.

Among Women

What is true of the mistress of the household is true, though in a lesser degree, of every other member of the family. Close association of the members enables them to determine with accuracy the inequalities in physical and mental endowments, and what may be legitimately expected of them and what not. What is beyond control of one is tolerated or endured by others. A member incapable of hard work

is not expected to contribute his share to the family income though he is allowed a share in the earnings as much as others. In these arrangements of the Joint family the spirit of equality is therefore at its best, for it is no hard and fast rule that sets up rigid and uniform standards, ignoring difference in temperament, in aptitude, and in moral and physical endowments. It is rather that equality which makes full allowances for these, and is ready to mitigate as far as possible the consequences of deficiencies, such as those described above.

Mutual Adjustment

The Joint family affords the best training in the humanities. Love and affection carried beyond the narrow circle of the family to embrace relations of the second and the third degree, and the close adjustment necessary in a family of many members living together, all based on an intimate knowledge of their qualities and feelings, helped to develop the understanding and cultivate emotions, and to exercise these virtues in dealing with those who were not of their flesh and blood. The self is subordinated to the non-self. Even in those moments when the self is apt to be lost in itself, or to be vigorously assertive and exclusive as in the early years of married life and love, when it would have the world all to itself, these indulgences are allowed only in moderation.

Humanising Influence

The mutual helpfulness enables the Joint family to tide over difficult times. It assures to individual members in distress the sympathy and attention and help of a large circle of relations. It fosters and

perfects family affections. It furthers co-operative effort towards the maintenance of a common status, of a common standard of life and of a common cultural level. The ancestral worship of the Joint family helps the members to hold sacred the memory of deceased members, and induces them to discharge faithfully the obligations incurred by them. Thus it is in India that the debts of a man long dead, for which there is no legal document in support, are nevertheless honoured by his relations and paid back to the last pie without recourse to law courts.

If the features described above are understood correctly, it is not difficult to realise that the Joint family is at its best only under certain conditions. Opportunities to increase the family income corresponding to the increase in the number of members must exist to maintain the family as a whole in the status to which it is accustomed, and these opportunities must exist in crafts or professions which the family has followed, or which do not tend to place the family in a lower status. So long as these conditions exist, the Joint family would be in its perfection. But a great many of them have disappeared and the rest are on their way to disappearing. Land is no longer to be had for the clearing, trades and crafts and professions to which the people were accustomed no longer flourish under modern conditions of fierce competition and studied neglect. The family income is at a standstill or is fast diminishing and the claimants are on the increase. It is small wonder if the obligations

Its Disintegration

of the Joint family are irksome and if the corporate life is no longer possible under the disparity of occupations pursued and the consequent inequality of incomes. A peasant cultivator may have one son who is a flourishing lawyer, another a humble priest and a third following his own humble profession. The exigencies of his profession may prevent the lawyer from staying with the rest of the members of the family and adjusting his standards to a common level. Nor does the lawyer escape the individualistic bent of his Western training and Western contact. Obligations of Joint family are forgotten or repudiated. The attitude of the lawyer reacts on other members of the household. What is not respected by one tends to be treated in the same way by others. In this atmosphere of jealousy and resentment, the legality of the Joint family alone is considered, a result seen to-day in the ever increasing recourse to law courts to decide family differences.

As if to meet these requirements, civilised administration has provided all the facilities required for legal decisions on every detail of inheritance laws. An individualistic administration, individualistic in its civil and criminal law and individualistic in its aims and ideals, tempts a very large class—increasingly large—to restrict their affiliations to the narrow circle of their own wives and children, and repudiate obligations incurred even by themselves for their own advancement. The descent from a more to a less exacting level of moral excellence is the easiest thing in the world, and in India, the

Assisted by a modern Administration

rulers assist the descent with the diffusion of their culture and the processes of their administration, little reflecting that the enlargement of the obligation to the State, that goes with the narrowing of the field of family affections in their own case, has not taken place in the case of the imitators.

Charges Considered

We may now consider the charges levelled against the Joint family. The charge that it breeds idlers has no foundation. In the old social order, and in the one that it is replacing, the Joint family fostered status. What that status was was determined by the position of the family, its resources in wealth and the character of its members. Whatever it was, all members claimed equality and maintained the family status. It was therefore necessary that no member of a family should take to an occupation which brought any lesser status than that which the family as a rule occupied. So long as castes were true to their professions, the difficulties of finding occupation of about the same status for all the members of one family did not arise. When the faithfulness to traditional occupation ceases, inequalities such as described above are apt to arise, and the member of a family, who distinguished himself, gave his descendants or his relations a status which rendered unwelcome the acceptance of employment of inferior status, out of keeping with it. The descendant of a Deputy Collector may rest content with the position of a clerk. He would not accept the position of a mechanic for fear that he would bring members of the family into disrepute. That

Status Afforded

is a wrong view to take, perhaps. But the status of the family is kept alive in memory by ancestral worship and its obligations as regards standards of social contact, purity of life, etc.

The Joint family, far from killing enterprise, fostered it in the conditions in which it was developed. Prolonged absence from home to meet the requirements of trade or war or other ventures was undertaken in the confidence that wife and children would have the care and attention of the rest of the family. The absence of the husband affected but little the life of the wife in the Joint family. The fear of wife and children being left uncared for, possibly for ever, which unnerves many, was not theirs. Nor must it be forgotten that there was a family opinion to which members had to confirm. One or two members remaining as idlers must necessarily feel the moral pressure of the rest of the members working hard for the family as a whole.

Enterprise Encouraged

The following quotation from Sleeman's *Rambles and Recollections* will be read with interest in this connection :—

"They (the soldiers) are taken from the agricultural classes of Indian society—almost all sons of yeomen—cultivating proprietors of the soil whose families have increased beyond their means of subsistence. One son is sent after another to seek service in our regiments as necessity presses at home from whatever cause—the increase of taxation; or the too great increase of number of families. . . . . . . No persons are brought up with more deference for parents. In no family from which we draw our recruits is a son through infancy, boyhood or youth, heard to utter a disrespectful word to his parents—such a word from a son to parents would shock the feelings of the whole community in which the family resides and the offending member would be visited with their highest

indignation. When the father dies, the eldest son takes his place and receives the same marks of respect, the same entire confidence and deference as the father. If he be a soldier in a distant land and can afford to do so, he resigns the service and returns home to take his post as the head of the family. If he cannot afford to resign, if the family still want the aid of his regular monthly pay, he remains with his regiment and denies himself many of the personal comforts he has hitherto enjoyed that he may increase his contribution to the general stock.

The wives and children of his brothers who are absent on service are confided to his care with the same confidence as to that of the father. . . . . The members of these families disposed as they always are to pay deference to such authorities are scarcely ever found to abuse it when it devolves on them, and the elder son, when he succeeds to his father, loses none of the affectionate attachment of his younger brothers."

To turn now to the excessive subdivision of landed property, this is an evil which has arisen within the last century, and arisen because of the growing poverty of the people. The opportunities of adding to the property of the Joint family having become few, and the Joint family growing bigger and bigger, there is less and less to share. The result is, there is jealousy and quarrelling, and life under a common roof has become insupportable. They thus divide the property into small fragments and separate; and landed property not being easily disposed of under pecuniary stress, it is valued highly and each member insists on a piece, however small. In the old days, land too small for division into smaller units of economic size was not divided but was put to auction among the claimants, it being knocked down to the highest bidder—the money less what fell due to the purchaser as his share being divided among the rest. This custom is disappearing.

Fragmentation under New Conditions

Litigation will obviously arise in circumstances such as these.

The charge against the Joint family that could be sustained, and curiously enough not usually made, is that it softens the character of its members. The cultivation of non-self, of emotion and understanding, which life in a Joint family fosters, produces a will which is not equal in strength to that of others in whom from the stress of individualism, the full force of it is not diminished in any way but rather strengthened by the fuller play allowed to the self. To admit this difference is by no means however to exalt the latter morally or socially. What individualistic societies have in this respect is but a temporary advantage. It is by no means certain that these societies will or can maintain individual will at its present sharpness and vigour. One has only to watch the progress of new movements, and the course of the history of these to realise that there is a tendency to a new orientation of Western society in which the free play of individual will become more and more limited and may become subject to conditions similar or analogous to those that have developed under Joint family. What the Joint family has done is to purify the will of those elements which may strengthen it, but also too often tempt it to use in wrong directions. The more vigorous will of Western societies is of great advantage to them in certain directions, such as securing ascendancy over every other form of society but it works unfortunately as between members composing their own society. The domination of

Its Real Weakness

self makes for efficiency but also for limited outlook and understanding, and for the unrest which is destructive of all spirituality.

The Future

Sweep away the fabric of the Joint family as a cobweb of the Past, dissolve away the delicate ties that bring the members together still in co-operation, amity and good feeling, set up individuals separately, and the enterprise and efficiency of the West can be reproduced in India so far as the difference in climate will allow. But the spirituality of India, its deep humanism and the tranquillities of life would be things of the Past. These tolerances, which have helped different communities to live together on a policy of live and let live, would be no more. Castes and communities, which spiritualised sympathy has enabled to live in peace and amity for forty centuries, would come into collision with each other in a universal upheaval, and India becomes as homogeneous as any of the countries of the West.

In spite of the fifty to sixty millions who do not know what it is to have a hearty meal, there is no need for a poor law in India. So large a number of impoverished persons in any other country in the World would make, under similar conditions, short work of any Government, however powerful.

Absence of a Poor Law

If it has not done so in India, it is because the stress and strain of poverty has been mitigated by mutual help and co-operation between the members of the Joint family and of caste.

The present undesirable features are the result of an administration, impersonal in its criminal as

well as its civil law and inelastic as regards collection of its revenue, and of the growing poverty of the people. Let these be changed and there would be, as a result, greater production of wealth by Indians themselves. The Joint family would function as efficiently as it did in the Past, ennobling, elevating and spiritualising the people, creating an atmosphere of contentment and peace, and enabling them to live in mutual accord and harmony.

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4. THE INDIAN HOME

East and West—Survivals—Marriage and Indulgence—Delicate Adjustments—Harmony based on Equality—Family Property—The Mater—A Typical Forenoon—Anxiety for Children—Outlook on Sex—Charity—Beggars and Diversion—A Typical Evening—Hospitality—Personal Cleanliness—Sanitation not Urban—Lack of Order, Its Meaning.

THERE have been occasional references to the features of the Indian Home, but a detailed account is necessary to give the foreign reader a deeper insight into the influences that mould the character and habits of the Indians, the more so because the foreigner, especially from the West, accustomed to a different kind of Home and seldom admitted to the privacy of an orthodox Indian Home, has very inaccurate notions about it. It is in the Home that the Indian is trained to standards of self-sacrifice, self-effacement and self-control which he is to practise in after life. So it is in the Home in the West, where more enduring elements of character are formed and fixed; but in the West the preparation and training are rather for the struggle in the World, for the World has reacted on the Home which has become an adjunct to it. In India, the Home is effectually shielded from the

East and West

World's corruptions and pollutions, and the training is rather to ensure the spiritual than the worldly advance of the individual. Azeema, the wife of Amir Ali, the Thug, lived with him as his favoured wife till his exposure, ignorant of the fact that her husband, whom she worshipped and loved passionately, was a cold-blooded, murderous Thug. The wives in Indian households are brought up oblivious of the ugliness of this World, all its passions and jealousies, so that they may nurse in their bosoms ideas of beauty and truth and devotion that might influence their husbands and their children.

Western influences have affected many an Indian Home, and the arrangements and appointments there are in imitation of the West. The increasingly keen struggle for existence, and the wide prevalence of poverty, are tending to break up the Indian Home and introduce into it the elements of selfishness and jealousy, but much the larger proportion of them still uphold the principles and pursue the ideals of the Past. There, one may still ascertain the nature of the influence that mould Indian character.

Survivals

An Indian home of this description is a joint family, not of a father, mother and children, but of several married couples with their children under one roof. The division of property at the death of the parents is a modern tendency and the result of the increasing poverty and the jealousies that arise from the inequalities that have been produced by British individualism. The

father arranges for the marriage of his children. It is considered a duty which he owes to them and, if he dies without marrying any one of them, he leaves one of his main desires in life unfulfilled. The married daughters may stay with their parents until the nuptial ceremony. During this period occasional visits are paid to the husband's household to familiarise the child-wife with its members. The sons after marriage have similarly to wait till the nuptials are over for the wives to become permanent members of the family. Between marriage and nuptials several years may elapse, depending on the age of the girl. The ceremony takes place always after puberty. The idea that a girl wife may have to share the bed of her husband earlier is entirely erroneous. The ignorant observer from the West forgets that in a joint family the girl is under the direction of the mother-in-law or of the eldest lady in the house. Even after the nuptials, the young wife may not sleep with the husband unless permitted to do so by the mother-in-law. In orthodox households there are specified days in the week, when alone the young couple may pass the night together. The mother of the husband is usually very careful that there are no opportunities for frequent indulgence on his part. Indisposition, however slight, of either of the couple, is a signal for separate bedrooms. The young couple are not permitted to meet too often in the day. Any desire on the part of either to do so is discouraged. Usually the wife is too shy to receive such advances as the impulsive young

Marriage and Indulgence

man may find opportunity to make. Several years have to elapse and children have to appear on the scene, or the young man has to become the head of the household, for him and his wife to lay aside their reserve.

The presence of a number of married couples with their children under the same roof gives rise to problems of adjustment, of which those that are brought up in a single family can have but little idea. In the latter, the adjustments are between husband and wife, and between them and their children. The authority of the parents is sufficient to secure peace and goodwill among the children. As between husband and wife, time and love are the solvents of incompatibility of temper and habit. When there are many families living under the same roof, there are very complex problems. Children may quarrel, and parents dare not take sides with their own children as against those of others. The mother and father rather take the side, not of their own boy or girl, but the part of the other lest there should be misunderstanding. No child will have any special favour from its parent, unless the children of other parents also have the same favour at the same time. The work of the household is divided among the members according to their aptitudes. Duties are exchanged to ensure the feeling that there is no unfair distribution of burden. No husband may take his wife to a theatre, or show or festivals without asking her sisters-in-law to join them. The wife of the man who is absent

Delicate Adjustments

from home, and children whose parents are dead receive special consideration. The attitude to them is governed by the reflection that, were their husbands present or father alive, they should have received all consideration, and that what is done in their absence should be in excess rather than in defect. Any neglect may bring the wrath of the lady of the house on the offender, and there would be no peace until the wrong is rectified. Sometimes the kindness extends beyond the family circle. A friend of the writer received a present of four pieces of fine muslin. One of his daughters-in-law, whose father was poor and could not afford the luxury of such fine material, was found not long after in tears, but would not answer when questioned. It did not take long to find out that the muslin reminded the daughter-in-law of the poverty of her father, who was forty miles away, and the daughter-in-law was happy when a present was thoughtfully and silently arranged. Cases like this can be cited from many Hindu families which still retain the instincts and virtues of the joint family. Girls of the house after marriage visit their parents several times during the year. On certain occasions of ceremonies and feasts, their presence is absolutely necessary. They may go to stay a month or two once a year, and they go with their children. Such of them as have heavy work in their husband's house stay for a longer period for much needed rest. The first accouchement of every girl has to take place in the house of her parents. In the seventh

month the girl is brought to her parents' home and there she remains until two or three months after delivery. The idea underlying this is as much the greater care and attention that the girl may receive from her own parents, as the prevention of sexual indulgence during advanced pregnancy. The number that may be under one roof may be very large, sometimes as many as forty to fifty, and the degree of adjustment called for is very great. Only on a basis of equality of all, of equal sacrifice, of equal enjoyment and of equal responsibilities can the family remain in concord and harmony.

Harmony Based on Equality

The management of the family property is under the direction of the father, or the nearest heir after him. On the death of the father, the eldest son takes up the responsibility and after him the next in order of succession. All purchases are made by the head, and all share equally; the sons may have each made separate earnings out of their individual efforts and these may go to their wives, and need not be added to the joint family income. Out of these they may meet the special requirements of their wives. The jewellery or *saree* specially favoured by a wife may be so purchased, but usually the son, who does so, also meets the wishes of other ladies of the household, especially the unmarried ones. A father purchasing clothes for his son usually purchases similar clothes for other boys of the same age. Sweets and toys are never purchased

Family Property

for one's own children only, but for all the children in the household.

Like the sons, the women are under the direction of the eldest lady in the house, the aged mother or the wife of the eldest son. All customary observances, such as presents on the occasions of their marriages, offerings to temples, invitations, obligations to relations, friends and to neighbours are under her special jurisdiction, and her wishes are usually respected. The management of the household is usually in the hands of the eldest lady, and what is required for ordinary expenses is made over to her.

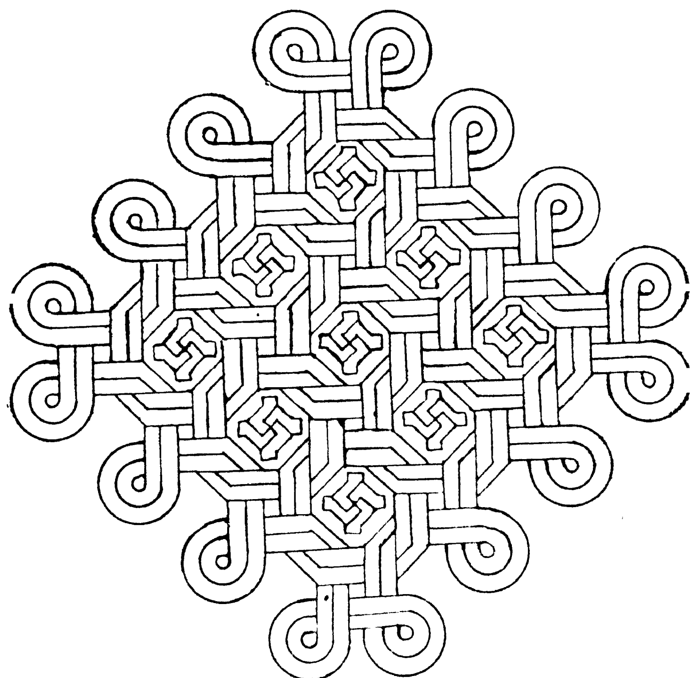
The Mater

The major requirements are usually purchased wholesale for the year, and monthly or daily purchase of these is considered a sign of poverty. Out of the money given for daily expenses savings may be effected, and these are considered her own. One may keep a cow and earn money by it. Another may set about collecting cocoanuts or pepper dropt to the ground previous to harvest, or may even claim a small share in the harvest. Betel leaves may be gathered and the leaves may be sold, or vegetables of various kinds grown. In one or another of these ways a little money is accumulated, and this is laid out at interest in small loans to neighbours. Money so accumulated is drawn upon only in cases of very great necessity, where the lady feels she has no right to ask her husband or father. It may go finally to a daughter married into a poor family to help her out in her difficulties. It is a passion with most Hindu mothers to redress, as far as their power



HINDU GIRL DRAWING PATTERN IN FRONT YARD

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DRAWING IN FRONT YARD

lies, inequalities in the circumstances of their married daughters. If one of them is a widow, her claim is first and last on her mother.

Each day has its routine. The women rise with the dawn and set about cleaning the door, sweeping the yard in front of the house and washing it with cowdung. The cowdung forms a paste with earth, and usually lays the dust effectively. On the ground so prepared, beautiful patterns are drawn with a white powder held between the thumb and the fore-finger, and dropt so as to form a thin line. The drawings are executed with rapidity and ease. The entrance door has marks made on it with turmeric and saffron. After that the cooking commences. In orthodox middle-class households, there are only two meals, one at about 10 in the morning and the other at about 7 in the evening. Nothing is taken between, except plain water. In fashionable households coffee is taken in the morning and sometimes an afternoon lunch. Children are usually served first and then the male members of the household, after the bath and prayers which are usually the first duties of the day. The women take their meals last. Leaves once eaten from are thrown out as unclean, and none may touch them or take any leavings out of them except the pariah. The last to take the meal usually is the lady of the house. It is not considered the correct thing for her to take her meals before others. The servants have theirs, and there is always sufficient food for a meal for a visitor who may drop in late

A Typical Forenoon

after all have eaten. Nothing is prepared in the house specially for any one, unless he be a patient. Every dish has to be shared by all. If lunch cannot be prepared for all but is nevertheless required by the head of the household at the place of work, it is not prepared at home, for all would have to share it. He has, therefore, to rest content with what can be obtained from a restaurant.

It was said that the eldest lady of the house is the last one to take the meal. That may appear rather trying. Sometimes she will have to wait much longer than usual. No wife would dream of taking her meal before her husband, even though the husband informed her beforehand that he would be late. So the mother waits till the return of her son. It was late in college life, that the writer found that his mother would wait thus. He had gone for a boating with his friends on a moonlight night and had not left word at home that he would be late. It was past one in the night when he returned, and found that his mother had not yet gone to bed but was reading the Ramayana. A casual question brought out the fact that she had not taken her meal. Not once in his life since has he been guilty of causing such inconvenience.

The dominating idea of marriage is parentage. Both the husband and the wife long for the birth of a son. The meaning of the word '*Putra*' is one who saves from hell. The performance by the son of the death ceremonies of the father secures bliss to the soul of the latter. This belief is deeply ingrained in the Hindu mind. The married

couple are not allowed to remain many years childless without making strenuous efforts to have issue. Pilgrimages are made, vows are taken, and doctors are consulted until a child is born. A childless wife is looked down upon. The passion for chidren has been developed in India through the ages. It is the result of the Hindu Law which requires a son to inherit the property of the father, and gives the wife no share in it except that of maintenance. But in ancient India, the main influence at work was the small numbers of the Aryan race. The abundance of tropical products offered no check to the multiplication of population. Of prudential restraints against early marriage that develop among the people of poor countries, there could be none in India. These are the factors that affect all classes. For the Aryans, far fewer than the aboriginals, an additional inducement had to be provided to secure rapid increase in their numbers and this was furnished by making it a religious requirement that the son had to perform the funeral ceremonies of the father for the peace of his soul.

Anxiety for Children

The many restrictions of sexual indulgence have already been indicated. The rules in respect of these are not merely negative. There are auspicious occasions when union is supposed to result in the production of not only healthy but gifted children. The time of union during the nuptial night is determined by the consultation of the horoscopes of the couple and the husband is informed of it. Like Jews, the Hindus have definite

periods when union is forbidden or enjoined. The knowledge in regard to these was spread widely before Western influence prevailed.

Outlook on Sex

In the Hindu conception of life sexual activity is nothing abnormal or out of the way, something profane to which no reference may be made at any time. It is, on the other hand, considered as necessary a function of the body as others, to be indulged, however, only in strict moderation and at the right time. The student may not indulge in it, nor the saint nor the striver after spiritual perfection. But the householder is given clear instructions as to the legitimate use of it. Sexual knowledge was therefore not discouraged, but had to be imparted at the right time to those who were to enter on the duties of the householder. The mother usually imparted it at the right time to the daughter. The intimate touch with her daughters required for the communication of this knowledge has been lost rapidly in modern India, and serious consequences have arisen affecting young married couples, compelled to live far from the parental roof.

To give alms to the poor is a religious duty which may not be excluded. Beggars usually come in the morning and none may be sent away without alms. They do not generally beg but shout the names of a God or Goddess, Narayana or Siva, blow a conch-shell and sing devotional songs to the accompaniment of one or the other of the many strange instruments to be found in India, or of a tin can used as a drum. Some may be

Charity



GIVING ALMS

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THE PERFORMING CALF

pilgrims who are on the way to a place of pilgrimage in discharge of a vow made on behalf of wife, son or other relation. Even lepers may visit the house. Some are not content with rice, but ask for a meal or clothing. It is considered highly irreligious to refuse alms to an old beggar. Except for those under Western influence, no one would dream of doing it. The number that do so is still very small.

Some of the devotional songs are highly religious and philosophical, and rendered so well that the ladies may turn out to listen. Nothing pleases the womenfolk more than these chances of respite from their duties. There are other diversions too. A snake charmer or juggler may come to give a half-hour's entertainment, or it may be a palmist who will picture the future, especially of the unmarried girls, in the rosiest colours, say hard things about those who refuse to make him welcome and bid him go. The performing monkey or calf causes no small mirth by its amusing tricks and antics.

Beggars and Diversion

The afternoon is usually a period of rest. In the evening there are offerings to be made to the temples or calls to be paid, but usually these duties are completed before nightfall. About six the lamp is lighted by the lady of the household, and it is placed in the verandah facing the East. She bows before it and so do all who see it for the first time in the evening. The lamp lighted, children gather round it to sing their evening devotional songs. These are of

extreme beauty both in point of composition and sense, and about a half hour is taken to repeat them.

A Typical Evening

When the songs are over, the children begin their study. The male members arrive one after another and discuss among them the affairs of the day. The conversation continues until meal time. After supper men may retire to bed. The women are the last to dine and retire.

Guests are very frequent in Hindu households. No relations or friends may come to the village or town without calling and if necessary, staying in the house; when there are several houses of relations, the one to which he is most closely related has the right to have him as guest. Married daughters and children may come for a stay of a month or more. Their husbands are doubly welcome. All this hospitality is on a generous scale of expenditure and no effort is spared to make the guest comfortable and perfectly at home.

Hospitality

Often considerable self-denial is exercised for the purpose, of course unknown to the guest. There are feasts connected with the numerous holidays. There are special dishes for each of these; the sweets are made in sufficient quantity on each of these occasions to enable distributions to be made among friends and relations. During some of these, married daughters and their husbands have to be invited and presents given to them. The preparation for these feasts and festivals taxes the womenfolk a great deal.

There are several days when fasts have to be undertaken. On new moon days generally there may be only one meal. On certain days no meal may be taken. The physiological effects of these fasts have been understood by the West only within recent years. It has been found that they help to deprive the system of the poisonous products of proteid decomposition. They are therefore of great value in maintaining health and vigour. Personal cleanliness is maintained at a very high level.

Personal Cleanliness

The daily bath is an institution from time immemorial, and is taken by all the twice born and by many of the Sudras. No matter how clean the clothing before the bath, it has to be changed and may not be used again before being washed. In addition to the daily bath, a great many of the higher castes bathe again on return from town. What is touched by the mouth is unclean. Two may not bite of the same fruit, drink from the same cup or eat from the same leaf or plate. The matutinal wash is an elaborate affair. Charcoal from paddy husk, the almond shell or areca nut with salt and pepper is used for cleaning the teeth. A number use the twigs of various kinds of trees, most of them having tannic acid. One end is chewed so as to make a brush. The tongue is cleaned by the sharp edge of a split cocoanut leaf rib being passed over the surface. The throat is cleaned by the middle fingers passed far up into it to scrub the pharynx. The operation is very noisy. The mouth is rinsed after each meal. The result of such attention

bestowed on the teeth is that Indians have much better teeth than Europeans. The writer was told by a dentist, who was in India for the examination of recruits for the War, that while he had to reject 30 per cent. of the British on account of bad teeth in England, he had not come across one case of bad teeth amongst the Indians he had to pass.

Baths and purifications are frequent in Hindu households. Pollution for at least eleven days, after a death has taken place, has to be observed in the house of close relations, and there are ceremonies to be performed after the eleventh day. The exact period, however, varies. The woman in her monthly period is untouchable and has a separate room where complete rest is enjoined on her. On the fourth day she has to take her bath, wash her clothing and clean the vessels she has used, and she joins again the rest of household. During the accouchement, there is again pollution attaching to her which lasts eleven days. When a death has occurred in a house in a village, until the dead body is buried or burnt and all the houses in the street purified, no cooking can be done in the whole street.

Cleanliness so rigorously enforced as regards the person is not maintained, however, in half that perfection as regards the home and surroundings. It is true that the houses are swept daily, morning and evening, and cowdung applied to the floor at intervals of a few days. The kitchen is cleaned with water daily. Nevertheless the bedding, etc., are seldom aired and sunned, and are

often unclean and dirty. Filth is thrown out of the house, but may accumulate not far from the door. There is no provision in the house for attending to calls of nature. The place for evacuations is the compound where there is one, or in the field close by. A great deal of filth accumulates this way. The powerful sun is effective in reducing it soon to harmlessness, but during the rainy months it is less cleansing in its effects. Manure pits are similarly too near human habitations, and the method of disposal far from sanitary. Cattle are often stalled inside the house. The objection taken to this practice is far less than it used to be, since the discovery that they ward off mosquitoes. Nevertheless the animals impart unwholesome smells to the dwelling which are far from pleasant.

Habits like these do not entail serious consequences in villages, but in towns they are a menace to the health of the people. One cannot help thinking, from a study of these habits, that Indians have yet to learn the sanitary disciplines required by associations of men in larger groups than those of the village. The Indian developed sanitation with reference to the simplicity of rural life and habits. He is unfamilar with rules and regulations that have to be observed, when in urban surroundings, where failure involves the whole population in serious consequences.

Sanitation not Urban

Cleanliness and sanitation apart, the houses are not made attractive or beautiful. Life is lived for the most part in the open in India. The fall

in temperature during the night is for the most part of the year so slight that sleeping inside rooms is not a necessity for nine months in the year. A considerable part of the twenty-four hours is spent on platforms in the verandah, or under the shade of trees, or in the open village hall. Only a very few hours are spent inside. That is possibly one reason. There is still a more important reason to be found in the introspective habit of most Indians. Order, arrangement and beauty are appreciated by all. But they are more necessary to them who are tireless and ceaseless in their activity. Concentrate the mind in any one direction, everything out of its place, abnormal or ugly is a disturbance because it tends to divert attention. The patient on his sick-bed has but limited energy, and so objects to noises and disturbances which he might have put up with when in health, but can stand no longer when ill. The man who concentrates on anything has similarly but limited energies left for other things, and therefore objects to whatever may distract or displease. Withdraw the mind within itself, and it is too remote and too absorbed for these influences to tell. So it tends to accommodate itself to its surroundings.

Lack of order: Its meaning

5. CASTE—DESCRIPTIVE

Hastily condemned as a giant octopus—Not peculiarly Indian, e.g., in America—Nature of Aryan Settlement—The three Dvija Classes—The Brahmin Class—The Colour Bar—Idealisation—More of Class than of Caste—Class Movements and Barriers—Caste Formations—Not Immobile—Admissions and Exclusions—Essential Features, a Brotherhood, Common Standards—No losses as in Class—Mutual Helpfulness—A Hierarchy not based on Might—but on Moral Discipline—Instructive Contrast with the 'Xian Clergy—The Responsibility of the Brahmin—Static and Dynamic Grouping—Removal of the Dynamic Element—The Root Cause for an Unhealthy Exaggeration—and Military Weakness—Consequent Degeneration of the Brahmin—The Economic Basis—The Rentier Class—Restrictions on the Untouchables, Parallel Cases—Untouchability and Climate—Unapproachability in Its Environment—Misunderstanding of the Foreign Critic—An Unsound Argument—Sense of Self-respect Sustained—Instructive Instances Revealing a Sense of Privilege—Broad Sense of Interdependence—Privilege and Joint Action—Weak Citizenship—Social Injustice—Forces of Self-interest—Correctives and Brahmin Responsibility.

OF the many institutions peculiar to the Hindu, Caste is certainly the most persistent and vital. It has existed almost from the earliest times, and the lapse of centuries has not altered it in any of its more essential features. Universally looked upon as an institution peculiar to India, it has had traced to it, directly or indirectly, almost all of the evils from which Hindu society has suffered in the past, or is suffering now. The so-called petrifaction of Hindu society, the disunion among castes, the occasional fights between them, the political impotence of the people as a whole, the existence of the untouchables, the oppression of these and more are said to be its progeny. But a few, a very few, have seen any good, however slight, in caste. But almost all, even among the educated Indians, consider caste as a giant octopus with its tentacles deep in the vitals of Hindu society. Educated Indians groaning under what they describe as caste tyranny are apt to accept a condemnation so universal as just and well deserved. They do not pause to consider that the condemnation is by foreigners who have never experienced the evils of caste themselves, and are not fully familiar with its operations in all aspects. Nor do they reflect that, unless it served some useful purpose, it could not be tolerated for over 20 centuries by any people, however debased or demented. An institution, for which there is not one good word to be said, could not possibly raise its ugly head in

Hastily condemned as a giant octopus

communities who separated from the rest of the people for the one reason of their wholesale repudiation of Caste. Much less could sections of the people, who have gone over to other religions which held Caste as an anathema, remain reconciled to it instead of throwing off its coils at the very first opportunity. One can only conclude that for all the evils traced to Caste, it has nevertheless served some useful purpose, which no substitute proposed or found for it can apparently discharge.

Not peculiarly Indian, *e.g.*, in America

Caste is by no means peculiar to India. It existed along the valleys of the Nile in ancient Egypt and it exists to-day in the most advanced country in the World, the United States. It would shock Americans as it shocked their countryman to whom the author mentioned it, that caste existed in their own country. The American Negro is a separate caste, as separate as any in India. He may not travel in the Southern States in the same compartment of the railway with the Whites, sit on the same bench in the tram-car, or even wait in the same waiting-room. He may not live in the same quarters of the town, will not be admitted to any hostel of the Whites, and he may not have a White woman in wedlock. He may not drink water kept for the thirsty wayfarer by the Whites, and he may not go to the same school. We have to go away down to the strata of the untouchables of Hindu society to come across restrictions so rigorous. My American friend was not much discomfited with the retort I gave, for he replied that the Negroes were a different race of

human beings. "You see, we do not want our civilisation destroyed by a set of half-civilised Blacks, who were once slaves, by association with whom we may become eventually degraded." "So, under these circumstances, you would justify exclusiveness such as yours?" "I should think so." "Then, my dear sir, we were precisely in a similar situation in India. We Indians were not all of one race." "Is that so? That is a new aspect which I knew never before," said the friend.

The ignorance of my American friend is shared by almost all European observers. However well-informed they are, when they speak or write of caste they forget the racial heterogeneity of the Hindus, and draw upon their vocabulary of condemnatory superlatives. What is true of the United States is true of South Africa, of Australia and New Zealand. The White races, with the doubtful exception perhaps of the Latins, have uniformly set their face against merging with the people among whom they settled. The Aryans were a White race. They were face to face in India with races far more numerous, less refined and less intelligent according to their standards. The problem that faced them 40 centuries ago is the problem which the European colonists in America, South Africa and Australia have had to face in more modern times. And the problem was much more difficult of solution. The European colonists had a tremendous superiority in their weapons of warfare, against which the bows and arrows of the hostile tribes, amidst whom they settled, were of

Nature of Aryan Settlement

little avail. The weapons of the Aryan settlers as well as the races they came in conflict with were of the same class, and the races were not mere savages, but had advanced several stages beyond that condition to the prosperity and resources of settled civilisations. The physical features of the country did not help them to free themselves from the disturbing influences of close contact with the lower races and cultures. The uniform fertility of the soil of the Indo-Gangetic plains needed only the removal of the jungle for settlement and cultivation, and close association with tribes settled together in the same tract, however different in race or culture, was difficult to avoid. It was not as it was with European colonists, the settlement of a highly civilised people among tribes that had not passed the nomadic state and therefore had no permanent location to come into contact with them frequently. The Aryan settlements were amidst others of a similar character as permanent as theirs, and neighbourhood and all that it implied was inevitable. In fact, the European settlements in the colonies were of agriculturists amongst nomadic tribes, while Aryan settlements in India were of nomadic tribes among agriculturist communities.

Caste in India may be traced to these causes. But so far the differentiation has been explained only as between Aryans and non-Aryans. The divisions of Aryans themselves into three classes is usually explained by the fact that the Aryans did not come into India as one body but in successive

hordes. The later one still nomadic found earlier ones settled down as agriculturists, and therefore, with less of the coherence, and militaristic organisation natural to nomadic tribes. It is not necessary to assume that the earlier Aryans had entered into marriage-relations with the aborigines and so destroyed their racial purity. Conquering nomadic tribes becoming predominant over agricultural communities is too frequent a phenomenon in the history of the World to render resort to the possible dilution of Aryan blood as the explanation for the third among the classes, namely, *Vaisyas*. We have thus three of the main divisions of Indian castes, the Military or *Kshatriya*, the *Vaisya* and the *Sudra*.

The three Dvija classes

The *Brahmins* are said to be the first class and are said to have been given their position because of the greater purity of their blood. This is contrary to the sequence of events usually observed in history. Warlike and predatory nomadic tribes establishing political predominance over peacefully inclined agricultural communities, and arrogating to themselves, for purposes of security, the militaristic functions of the entire community is what is most usually observed in the course of human history. The rise to influence and power of a priestly class is a phenomenon which takes place much later when the community, as a whole, has assumed a more or less settled character and organised its activities free from the distractions incidental to the establishment of a new home. What must have happened therefore was that the

priestly class rose to power later. It is natural to expect that the religious bond alone could keep in union and concord, communities whose rural pursuits had dissolved away the tribal bond. The uniting principle being religious sentiment, the priestly class was bound to gain in influence and power, which would enable them to set themselves up eventually as the highest class of the community. The character of their calling rendered necessary on their part stricter observance of the codes of morality and religion than other classes of the community. It is obvious that a military class in political power would not have allowed any but members of their own class to become priests; the *Vaisyas* were therefore out of the question as a hereditary priesthood. Selected therefore from the very highest class, namely, *Kshatriyas* themselves, and therefore in point of racial and intellectual equipment on the same level with them, the *Brahmins* had the additional advantage of a calling that left, in course of time, the interpretation of religious texts and laws in their hands, and had laid upon them the duty of setting a moral and religious standard to the whole community. With the deepening influence of religion on the community, the Brahmins once occupying but a secondary place in social rank, progressed in sanctity until they came to be reckoned the first among the four divisions of the Hindus.

The Brahmin Class

The four main classes amongst Hindus originated thus. It will be seen that the colour bar was

as vital to caste as it is among the Europeans to-day. The first three were the *Savarnas*, those with colour and the last was the *Avarnas*, those without. It may also be noticed that the first three arrogated to themselves the more important functions of the community and to the *Avarnas* were assigned the function of manual services. The assignment of a separate function to each class carried with it limitation of opportunity to specified fields, to which the less favoured were not likely to reconcile themselves. Even the *Kshatriyas* would not accept the second place in which they found themselves, and the earlier literature of the Hindus gives ample evidence of serious and violent conflict on their part with the Brahmins. The conflict between *Vasistha* and *Visvamitra* and that between Chanakya and the house of Nandas are too well known to be set forth here. To the *Sudras*, forbidden under heavy penalties from trespassing into any other field but that of manual service, the position must have been particularly irritating. We accordingly find that the whole trend of religious and social evolution in India during subsequent centuries was to give this functional differentiation of the Hindus a religious and philosophical basis. Human relationships based on submission rather than on agreement have little of the elements of permanency. To acquire that character they have to be idealised, and one of the most successful ways of idealisation is to found them on a religious basis. Reinforce them with philosophical doctrine, and the relationships

The Colour Bar

acquire a permanency far more enduring than law or force can give to it. We have seen how the Joint family originating from economic necessity was idealised on a basis of ancestral worship, and how one of the consequences that flowed from it was the honouring of a debt by successive generations. Caste, as will be seen, was similarly idealised and therefore has obscured the essential foundations on which it was built up.

Idealisation

The four main divisions of the Hindus are not so much castes as classes. They are not castes as they are so often spoken of. What distinguishes one caste from another is the prohibition in regard to inter-dining and inter-marriage. But as between the main divisions of Hindu organisation there are racial, political and cultural factors in addition, which make them correspond rather to the classes found in other countries. Very early, Megasthenes found castes following different professions among the *Sudras*, and to-day in each of the main divisions there are hundreds of castes, sub-castes, and what may be called incipient castes, or castes that are in the course of formation. It is necessary to stress this distinction, although the causes that give rise to the castes are more or less the same as those which gave rise to the four main divisions.

More of Class than Caste

Classes have arisen among peoples or communities under much the same circumstances all over the World. The predominance of a group proceeding from their political power, wealth or

racial purity tempts them to raise a social barrier as against the rest, and a class has originated. The upward movement on the part of the rest of the people to share in the immunities and advantages the newly formed class enjoys, lands them in various stages of proximity according to their ability, resources, etc., and other classes are formed, and the usual divisions follow of upper, middle and lower classes. The degree of exclusiveness of each of these depends on the exclusiveness of the highest class. If the barriers they raise are impenetrable, so are the barriers raised by the other classes. When the boundary wall of the highest class is impenetrable, caste is formed, and it is impenetrable when the racial difference is reinforced by conspicuous colour difference as in the United States to-day between the White and the Negro. In India the problem was far worse, for unlike the Whites in the United States who are 10 times the number of negroes, the relative strength of the Aryans and the coloured aboriginals was the reverse. That Aryans had to be strictly endogamous far more than the Whites of the U. S. A. was a natural necessity and caste was the result. The best security of a predominant class, racially and socially exclusive, would have been a democracy, and the Aryans were in their earlier history democratic, but the formation and ascendancy of a priestly class required for its permanence the creation of a barrier as rigid as the one already raised lower down at the colour line, and the submergence of

Class Movements and Barriers

the racial and economic motive under religious and philosophical explanations prevented the tendency common to all classes to fusion and association. Later on fresh barriers arose, each in point of strength and exclusiveness similar to the ones already raised, for all proceeded now from a common religious basis and no longer from varying degrees of racial purity or wealth. This appears to have been the origin of caste in India.

Once the caste principle came into being, the multiplication of castes from migration, occupation, language, etc., followed. The institution of the Joint family was another source. The members of a Joint family remaining together have but to restrict their marriage alliances to a couple or more of families of a similar type for the whole group so formed to become a separate caste. A group, from superior wealth able to live a higher standard of life would soon differentiate itself from the rest of the caste and seek to reinforce that differentiation by special observance in worship, and by distinctive regulations of habit and custom. A new discipline and new process in cultivation, or an improvement in handicraft may furnish distinct economic advantages to a family which, seeking to preserve it for itself or afraid it may be lost by the apathy or ridicule of the caste as a whole, may preserve it by sharing it with a few other families who agree with them to keep distinct from the main caste. The essential condition for the formation of a separate caste is that the circle is sufficiently wide from which girls may be had

Caste Formations

in marriage, and once this requirement is met, any differentiation, however accidental, that will make for improved status, would be temptation enough to establish a distinct identity. This is the process of formation of incipient caste and the process may be watched with ease even to-day.

Not Immobile

The view of most students of caste that it is a close hierarchy, each caste in its place rendering the movement of individual parts impossible and the community as a whole immobile, is very far from the truth, and discloses no small ignorance of Indian history. Castes which occupied once a high social position are now degraded and low, and castes which were once considered despicable, have in course of time attained to a high social level. A caste of weavers in South India has become so refined as to claim equal rank with the Brahmins. Sections of the caste known as the *Lambanis*, who were once camp followers of the Marathas, have settled down as agriculturists, and several of them have discarded their peculiar dress to adopt that of the communities in their neighbourhood. Many Brahmin sects in Behar are so degraded and unclean and poor, that they have no hesitation to go for menial service in Sudra households. The

e.g., rise and fall of particular castes

process of degeneration is easy to follow. Economic distress compels relaxation of caste and individual discipline. and speedy demoralisation results. Individuals become associated in various humble capacities as labourers hired for the day, as servants, as cooks, etc., with castes of

inferior social position but superior as regards wealth, and the contact is ruinous in the long run to the superior discipline of the individuals who accept such service. The social standing is gradually forgotten, and but the empty name of what was once a superior caste remains.

Such degradations have been more frequent during the last century or two, in the course of which disturbances to the old social economy have been frequent and violent. The immobility of the Hindus is not in respect of movements of individual castes upward or downward. Hindus have absorbed into their bosom multitudes of communities. The phenomenon is more frequently to be observed along the borders of Hindu society.

Admissions and Exclusions

Outside the Hindu fold proper there were numerous communities in varying stages of moral and intellectual evolution. As the Aryans settled in new tracts, they came in contact with new tribes aud communities, and the process of Hinduisation was started to bring these into the fold. A Brahmin had but to settle amidst a community, and gradually refine the religious and social customs to the Hindu level for the community to become a section of the Hindus. There was very little sacrifice involved on the part of the Brahmins. Their worship, religion and custom were but little affected. The newly admitted group, on the other hand, increased the opportunities of the poor Brahmin to add to his income by the services he was now called upon to render to the new entrants

in religious ceremonies. These admissions were, of course, to the lower strata of the Hindu society. There were, however, occasions when admissions took place at a higher level. It is on record that many times in the course of Indian history communities like the Scythians have been accepted as Kshatriyas, and have been accorded status and privileges appropriate to that caste. If the Hindu has brought communities within its pale, it has, though less often, sent others out of it. A number of communities among the so-called untouchables were once within the Hindu fold, or were Buddhists who, having remained faithful to their religion, on the revival of Hinduism, were compelled to accept their present degraded position by victorious Hindu kings.

Having dealt with the more fundamentals of the misconceptions in regard to Caste, we can deal with its more essential features. Hierarchy as castes are viewed as a whole, each caste had a democratic organisation. Indian caste is a brotherhood of which members, however varying their position in point of wealth, were equal. With the introduction of individualism and the disturbing influence of foreign rule, classes have sprung up in certain higher castes obscuring their democratic character. But it may be observed almost in perfection in strata lower down in the social scale. In all matters affecting caste welfare decision rests with the caste council, before which all castemen are equal. The departure from accepted

Essential features—a brotherhood

usage or custom is prevented by fine or by ostracism. The excommunicated individual has no place in the caste or outside, his fellow castemen may not associate with him, may not marry into his family, and may not share food with him. No punishment could be severer, and the dread of excommunication suffices to reconcile individuals to caste discipline, however irksome it may be.

The sense of equality has interesting consequences. At marriage feasts any member of the caste has the right to be present, and in rural areas, even among the high Brahmin castes, a marriage feast is an occasion where there will be no cooking in any of the houses belonging to the caste. The formality of invitation is not usually insisted on. The costliness of Hindu ceremonies and feasts, of which European observers never fail to speak with vehemence, is the result of the necessity of sharing them not only with all relations, but with individuals belonging to the caste in the neighbourhood. An individual uninvited treats the omission as a slight, and has a right to bring the matter up before the *panchayat* which may fine the party for the offence. The right is not usually claimed among the higher castes in these days, but among the lower. Exercise of this results in heavy fines which are usually sufficiently high to cover the cost of a second feast where the omission is rectified.

The second consequence of the democratic spirit is a uniformity in the standard of life, every departure from which on the part of individual families leads to serious dislocations. A family

rising too far above the common level may find it difficult to obtain suitable matches for girls belonging to it; what is true of the standard of comfort is true also of the standard of intellectual attainments. A family compelled to occupy a higher level and desirous of maintaining it along with a selected number of other families related to it by marriage, has to form a separate caste and thus differentiate itself from the main body; that it is one of the causes which give rise to new castes has already been mentioned.

Common Standards

This occurs only, however, when in families individuals arise of conspicuous ability who, by force of their character or intellect, are able to secure for their family and its affiliations a higher status. Others, less brilliant but still above the ordinary level, stay within the community, and the latter is the better and the more-progressive, for their continued presence. Among people organised on a class basis, individuals who progress beyond the common level seek to join a higher class, and the beneficial influence of their continuance in the class from which they sprang, is lost to it. Because of the frequent losses, the class remains more or less at the same level.

No losses as in class

The next important feature of caste, obscured like its democratic organisation by modern influences, is the spirit of co-operation of the members. The individualism of British administration has played havoc with it, but evidences may still be seen in varying degrees. A few examples

can alone be cited. Among certain trading castes it is considered a duty, which none may evade, the starting on his feet again of a member whose business has been ruined. On occasions of festivals and feasts, relations and friends undertake the responsibility for the supply of the various articles required; rice, vegetables, sugar, milk, ghee, plantain leaves for eating, the loan of cooking vessels,—each holds himself responsible for the one or the other of these. A man in financial distress may hold a feast to which he invites his friends. There may be among them those who do not belong to the caste, but they are equally welcome; and arrangements are made for them with due regard to their caste scruples. When the feast is over, they gather round a lighted lamp where contributions of money are made, each item being recorded. The money is returned when similar occasions arise with suitable additions to make up for interest. The debt is honoured from generation to generation as a debt of the family. In certain cases co-operation goes so far that the party accompanying the bridegroom has to pay to the father of the bride a sum of money made up of contributions from each at a customary rate. There are numerous other customs in which the principle of co-operation exists but is less obvious. A chit fund may be looked upon as a business proposition. It is, however, usually started by one in urgent need of cash on the promise of friends to join the fund, made not from any necessity of theirs but as a friendly

Mutual Helpfulness

obligation. The first instalments collected go to the starter and are usually sufficient to meet his needs. Subsequent ones go to the individuals by lottery or by auction, in which latter case the lowest bidder takes the amount, less the deductions which are shared by all. On the first day of entering a newly built house, the owner may invite his friends to a feast where presents may be given in the shape of money or furniture.

The spirit of equality and brotherhood prevails between individuals of a caste. As between caste and caste, the relationship is of a hierarchy, but a hierarchy which has important features which mitigate the evils incidental to it. A great deal of criticism has arisen, because of the habitual misconception that wealth, privilege and power go with the higher caste or class, and that the lower strata must become restive under the pressure from above. There is too, in the present day, jealousy between caste and caste much to strengthen the misconceptions. Intercaste jealousy is, however, a modern phenomenon and was not in existence in pre-British days when communities were not released from their ordered place into a common competition. What there was of it arose when a caste sought, as a whole, a higher status in the social scale. Such movements are easily suppressed, because the whole people would rise as one against them. Similar suppression can be cited from the history of other countries where no caste existed, though they took more an economic than a social form. Laws passed

A Hierarchy not based on Might

against labourers in the reign of Richard II in England were worse than any which can be found in Indian history. It is always to be remembered that the hierarchy in India at no time rested on military strength, but that the people were reconciled to it by the philosophical and ethical basis given to it. The head of the hierarchy as the Brahmins were, they were not by any means the richest in the community. Theirs was not a life of ease and plenty. Enforcing the observance of caste on others, they were not lax themselves. The abstinence from certain classes of foodstuffs including among them not only meat of various descriptions, but even vegetables as onions, etc., the numerous fasts, the strict regulations of daily life, and the elaborate ceremonies to be performed every day involved a far greater degree of self-control and discipline than what castes lower to them had to observe. The Brahmin may not shave on all days he likes, and he may not share bed with his wife except on specified days. It was his *dharma* to earn his living by begging. Begging of relations and friends is among the ceremonies of initiation of certain Brahmin castes, and there are thousands of Brahmins today who live by begging. Alone amongst school students, the poor Brahmin boy begs from door to door. Widowhood in its most rigorous form exists among the Brahmins. Whatever might have been the origin of the horrible custom, the largest number of cases of *Sati* were from among the Brahmin widows.

But on Moral Discipline

Only these few customs among many need be mentioned to disabuse the foreigner's mind of the notion that the Brahmin class has any close analogy with the highest class of Western society. One has to go back centuries to find an analogous class in the medieval priesthood of Europe. Even there, the contrast presented is striking and instructive. While the influence exercised by both was much the same, European priests soon became associated with extravagant luxuries and vices of the worst description. From their palaces surviving to this day in which their successors live, and from the enormous incomes accruing still to the Archbishops and Bishops, one may trace in dim outline the luxurious and debaucherous life medieval priests lived, in violent opposition to every teaching of Christ. The Brahmins of India, on the other hand, have, with the lapse of centuries, progressed in the direction of self-control. There is ample evidence to show indeed that in numerous respects—not in all, it may at once be admitted—restrictions on his passions and appetite have increased rather than diminished, and that the simplicity of life enjoined on him has not been sacrificed to the detriment of the social position assigned to him. With the power they enjoyed under Hindu kings, and with the interpretation of Sastraic texts in their hands, it was no small achievement to have resisted the temptation to indulgence and excitements to which the European priests gave way, once political power came into their hands. We have to seek in this

Instructive contrast with the 'Xian clergy

steadfastness to a high ideal of self-control through the centuries for the explanation that their position as social heads is retained to this day after many centuries, almost undiminished and unassailed.

To pay to them this tribute for an achievement so remarkable, perhaps unique in history, is not to say that the Brahmins placed exclusive reliance on a faithful adherence to the standards of discipline and self-control described above. We shall have occasion later to refer to the religious and ethical basis they gave to caste.

The Responsibility of the Brahmin

Apart from these which reflect credit on their intellect and self-control, they have pursued a policy which, while it strengthened their own position, was detrimental to the best interests of Hindu society as a whole. We have been reminded a little too often, since the advent of the Non-Brahmin movement that the Brahmins were the saviours of Indian civilisation. That is perhaps in a great measure true, seeing that they seldom failed to set a high moral and religious standard to the community. But it is necessary to remind them at the same time that if Indian civilisation is the washed-out, devitalised thing it is to-day, and has been in political subordination to successive conquerors of the country, it is in a great measure the result of Brahmins placing their own self-interest above that of the Hindu society as a whole.

To understand this charge one has to go back to the divisions of Hindu society into four main

classes. If each one of these was an organ of the body-politic, the efficiency of the whole organism depended on the efficiency with which each of these organs performed its functions. The Brahmin had to look after the moral and religious duties of the community. The Kshatriya was entrusted with the duty of waging war in defence or offence. The Vaisyas were entrusted with the function of production and distribution, and the Sudras were the menials. In this scheme of social organisation, the Kshatriyas had concentrated in them the dynamic elements of society. They were the rulers and the fighters. The Brahmins being at the head of society had necessarily to be static, for any change in society might find them deprived of their exalted position. It was but natural that elements so opposing in society should come into conflict, and that conflict we have already referred to elsewhere. For the present, it need only be said that the struggle between the Kshatriyas and the Brahmins was continued until the disappearance practically of the former from Indian History. Tradition attributes it to the conflict between the Kshatriya princes which culminated in the battle of Kurukshetra, where they committed practically racial suicide. The effect is supposed to have been much the same as of the Wars of the Roses in England which did away with the old English artistocracy. Another tradition, however, has it that the incarnation of Parasurama annihilated the Kshatriyas 21 times. Whether there is any

Static and Dynamic Grouping

truth in the traditions or not, the fact remains that Kshatriyas as a class disappear from Indian History from early times. Their existence as a class was not recognised by the Brahmins, nor for the matter, of the Vaisyas, though there are numerous castes which claim the latter rank. The non-recognition of the Kshatriyas, taken along with the accounts one finds of the frequent quarrels between the Kshatriyas and Brahmins in Hindu literature, points to the Brahmins as the class responsible for the disappearance from Hindu society, of the most dynamic and progressive of the element in it. The amputation of so important a limb incapacitated Hindu society for ever as much as the removal of the thumb incapacitates the hand. Caste, to the extent it had made for efficiency in the inherited profession, operated against it in professions other than one's own. The function of protection of the community from invasions could not therefore be satisfactorily discharged in a caste ridden society by any caste other than the one specially assigned to that function, the more so because even the mental dispositions had been suitably altered by religious theory, inherited aptitude and family atmosphere. Incapacity and indisposition to war-like pursuits, on the part of the castes who were born into other professions, was inevitable and it was not difficult to see that it was fatal to military efficiency.

Removal of the Dynamic Element

The forward spirit of adventure and romance, the passion for heroic deeds, for distinctions of

valour, for the excitements of the chase, are virtues special to a warrior class, and the exercise of these set in circulation in society wholesome influences that elevate, ennoble and fortify human character. An efficient military class, from whom were drawn the kings and the military leaders, would alone act as a counterpoise to the static tendencies of the Brahmin caste, and act as a check to an other-worldly Conservatism. A spirituality to remain healthy, prevented from anæmic flabbiness, had to be constantly checked against the more manly of human virtues. The constant association of the Brahmins with the warrior caste, as their spiritual guides and advisers, would have been to the mutual benefit of both, would have helped the one to develop the spirituality based on something more positive and substantial than a morality of negative virtues, and to purify the manlier virtues of the other out of the grosser elements that are too often associated with them.

The Root-cause for an Unhealthy Exaggeration

We miss in the Brahmins in later Hindu literature the virtues on which alone true spirituality can be nursed. If the Brahmins set the spiritual and moral standard to the community, the Kshatriyas set the standard for the more vigorous of human virtues sublimated in a furnace of high spirituality. In the whole range of human literature there are no characters so sublimely heroic, so courageous, so calm, so elevated in thought and deed, so selfless, yet so assertive where truth is at stake, as Bhishma or Karna or Yudhisthira. The disappearance of

such a class upset the normal balance of Hindu society, and an exaggerated other-worldliness developed to the detriment of virtues, without which no society can long be preserved from invasion or aggression and from internal decadence.

One source of political weakness of Hindu kingdoms arose from this circumstance and continues to this day. The military leadership was assumed usually by members of the family or the community to which the king, not necessarily a Kshatriya, belonged, and by men of whatever caste who brought trained soldiers to the aid of the king. There was therefore in military leadership not the inherited aptitude and skill, the unanimity of feeling or discipline, nor the sense of obligation and service that a common caste would have brought to it. Too many among the commanders were no more than adventurers who sought the first opportunity to carve out kingdoms for themselves. The temptation to defection and disloyalty would have been far less in a caste which had military leadership as a function assigned to it, and was reconciled to it by tradition, habit and religious dogma. With the Kshatriyas out of the way, it was natural that the Brahmins should have played an increasingly large part in the exercise of temporal powers, of which, as ministers and interpreters of Law of Kshatriya kings, they had already enjoyed no small share. Nor would there be the check on any ambition to usurp royal power to themselves. We come across in the course of Indian

And Military Weakness

History kingdoms with Brahmins as kings. The usurpation by the Peshwas is the most recent, and sufficient information is available in regard to it to enable us to see how ruinous to India was the assumption of royal power by the Brahmin ministers of the Maratha court. This was the signal for the Maratha chieftains to break away from the empire of Shivaji and become independent princes. With more cohesion they might have tried, and successfully tried, conclusions with the rising British power. Their disruption was responsible more than any other factor, for the success, in diplomacy as well as in war, of the British with the Maratha power.

The political ascendancy of the Brahmin had other consequences, less obvious but equally significant. Under the Peshwas, no less than a fourth of the revenue was spent in encouragement of Brahmin learning and scholarship. There was too, a steady displacement by Brahmins of other castes in the executive administration. Kings from other castes than the Kshatriyas could not move with Brahmins on the same high plane as the Kshatriya kings. They were dependant on the

Consequent Degneration of the Brahmin

Brahmins to refine their castes into a higher social level. That these kings would become more amenable to the wishes of the Brahmins was inevitable, and it was no small temptation to obtain from them decrees which strengthened their privileged position. The prohibition against Brahmins crossing the sea is an innovation to prevent reactions arising at home from foreign travel. There is no Sastraic

objection to travel by Brahmins and there were Brahmins among the emigrants to Ceylon, Java and other islands of the Archipelago, and to Alexandria. Their acquaintance with foreign manners and customs must have produced, in those who returned, sufficient breadth of outlook to make them less tolerant of the growing other-wordliness of their stay-at-home caste fellows. It was manifest, therefore, that, to prevent any untoward cause of reform movement arising from among them, an interdict against the Brahmin crossing the sea should be issued under the mandate of the king. There may be no doubt therefore that the spirituality tended to run to excess, and become oblivious of the sterner realities of life, as the Kshatriyas ceased to exert any wholesome and corrective influence.

The question may arise how comes it that in the absence of the Kshatriyas, recognised as such by the Brahmins, no other caste stepped into their place. It is to be remembered that the Brahmins, in so far as they were interpretors of Law and advisers to the king, enjoyed a considerable measure of political power. The religious books were exclusively their possession, and the hiatus between the Brahmins and Sudras was too great in point of intellectual attainments and moral standards to be easily bridged. Nor was it likely that opposition to Brahmin ascendancy would arise in times when religion was the predominating influence in human mind not only in India but all over the World, and in India, be it remembered, the ascendancy, as

we have seen, rested on the more substantial basis of the deep spirituality of the caste as well as religious doctrines accepted by Hindu society as a whole.

The Economic Basis

We have so far considered caste as a layering of races. There was, however, an economic layering beneath. It is a fact that the religious and ethical basis given to caste was in addition to the economic. Brahmins might have trusted to the charity of Hindu society for their maintenance, and to the incomes derived from services at Hindu ceremonies. Kshatriyas must have been in the position of an aristocracy. Vaisyas were merchants and the Sudras were the actual producers. We have seen how the abundance of fertile land and the simplicity of life, enforced by the tropics, rendered precarious the existence of a rent-earning class, and how it would continue so long as land could be had for the clearance. Facilities, therefore, of the labouring class, for settlement and improvement of their social and economic position, were abundant. Any rise in the standard of living would make for greater productive effort to maintain the standard of living. Action and reaction between the two would gradually lift the community as a whole to a higher economic level. It was to the interest therefore of the superior caste that limits were imposed on the standard of living of the lower caste, and that they were prevented from imitation of the higher. A large number of restrictions on the lower castes as the *Sudras* and the untouchables, some of them

continued to the present day, have to be viewed in this light. There are castes who are not allowed to wear ornaments of gold, who may not cover the upper part of the body; the houses built for them should not rise above a certain height; certain luxury articles of food may not be used by them, brass vessels and others are not allowed to them. These restrictions continue as custom. It is obvious that they have as much economic as social significance. Any extensive use by the lower class of these would have led ultimately step by step to a reduction of rent, and the higher castes, so long as they would not work themselves and were exclusively dependent on it, saw to it that no circumstances arose which in any way might tend to diminish their share in the yield from land.

The Rentier Class

These restrictions were strictest on the untouchables. These are communities, strictly speaking, outside the Hindu fold. Their modes of worship and ceremonies appear to be more or less Hinduised, because of the natural imitation of the higher castes, inevitable to the lower strata of society, for which there were, besides the usual natural impulses, the gravitation of the central truths of Hinduism. In spite of these, they may not be regarded as Hindus, except those who were degraded to that position as a result of political causes referred to earlier. The treatment of the untouchables was, in its more essential features, in no respect worse than the treatment of similar

Restrictions on the Untouchables

communities outside the pale of society in other parts of the World. European races, who never are tired of lecturing Hindus on what is called a monstrous attitude, have first to set the example, and one has only to recall the treatment of the Negroes in the United States, the assignment of separate carriages in railways, separate seats in the trams and separate waiting-rooms in railway stations, to realise how far the Westerners are from setting an example to Indians. The Ainos in Japan are in the same position as the untouchables in India. It is by no means suggested that the existence of untouchability, or what goes under a different name in other parts of the World, is any justification for it in India. But what is pointed out as a phenomenon peculiar to India is shared by the rest of the World. When an inferior race, or what is considered an inferior race, is at the border land of society, and there is danger to the social fabric from that community crossing over, barriers are erected, and their strength and impenetrability depends on the magnitude of the danger.

Parallel Cases

What is peculiar to racial exclusiveness in India is untouchability of the races outside the pale of society; that untouchability goes so far as unapproachability. There are castes in India who may not go within 60 feet of the higher castes without polluting them. This is certainly peculiar to India. Without in any way justifying this reprehensible custom, the causes of this singular phenomenon have to be explained.

Frequent baths are a necessity in the hot climate without which the body and the clothing soon begin to give off unpleasant smells of perspiration drying on them, and many low castes even to-day have not learnt the habit. Untouchability has been known in India from the earliest times. Untouchables were mostly aboriginals accustomed to practices such as eating dead animals, which the more refined Aryans abhorred. They were unclean, and if cleanliness was looked upon as next to godliness anywhere, it was in India. The European branches of the Aryan races did not have the same regard for this virtue. The climate of their country was cold and its consequences far less unpleasant than in the hotter, often steamy, climate of India where the Aryans had to maintain greater cleanliness. The standard was set by the Aryan priesthood to the whole community. It is significant that the European Aryans called the tribes, who were not of their blood, barbarous (men accustomed to wear a beard), and, on the other hand, Indian Aryans used the term *Mlechhas* or the unclean to denote similar people. It was natural that the aboriginal tribes should be looked upon as untouchables in India. Even as early as the Buddhist period, we have evidence to show that they could not form part of a village or town, and had to live away from it. It is on record that a Hindu maiden happening to see an untouchable, as she started on a journey, washed her eyes to clean them of their pollution.

Untouchability and Climate

From untouchability to unapproachability the step is not far. It is, however, on the Malabar coast alone that this disgraceful custom prevails in India, and there are special circumstances which give rise to the custom. The Nayars, though highly intelligent and educated and belonging to a warrior class, are untouchables to the Namboodiri Brahmin, the most orthodox Brahmin in India. Untouchability does not, however, prevent younger male members of a Namboodiri family, who by custom cannot marry until they become heads themselves, from seeking temporary unions among the Nayar women. The Namboodiri may not partake of food at the house of his concubine, but he might spend the night in her house. The custom is described only to show how untouchability has not usually the severity which the foreigner may associate with it. That is, however, by the way. All the castes below the Nayars are subject to prohibited degrees of approach of the higher castes, and the lowest, the Nayadies, have to stand nearly a furlong away from a Nayar to avoid polluting him. A Namboodiri or a Nayar, who goes through the long and narrow foot-paths, where he is likely to come too near a low caste, usually gives a warning shout, which is the signal for the low caste to make way for the customary distance. One has to know a little of the features of the country-side in Malabar to understand the growth of this custom. The country is cultivated for the most part with paddy and cocoanuts. The

Unapproachability in its Environment

cocoanuts are in plots, known as the compounds, separated from one another by deep and narrow lanes. The paddy plots are limited by bunds, as narrow or even narrower, along which but rarely two can go abreast. The richer generally travel in palanquins but the vast majority go by walking. These narrow paths and lanes have necessarily to be used by the high as well as the low castes, and the difficulty of passing one another along them without touching is obvious. The lower had to make way if it was a short and narrow lane, and not until the high caste passed could the other use the way without risk of touching. As the lanes are as deep as 4 to 10 feet or more, without a warning shout it is impossible for a high caste to avoid suddenly coming upon a low caste in the same lane. The Malabar coast is peculiar in being the exception to the general rule in having no village system. There the houses in a locality are not huddled together into a village, but each is separately situated in usually a cocoanut garden of its own, with ample space around. In the absence of the village system the sanitary needs were far less. The people answered the calls of nature in the garden attached to the house, and the services of a scavenger, required in villages elsewhere to keep the houses and their immediate neighbourhoods clean of refuse and rubbish, were not a necessity. The *toti* in the villages in India is too vital a need to be kept at a distance. On the Malabar coast no inconvenience would arise from preventing his approach to the habitations of the higher-caste.

The result was that unapproachability arose as a feature of caste organisation on the Malabar coast.

Having explained the origin of untouchability and unapproachability, we may turn to the condition of the untouchables, about whom the foreigner has exaggerated ideas of oppression. To look upon the human being as an untouchable at all is so unfamiliar an idea that the foreigner lets his imagination free play and thinks the untouchable must be subject to the most heartless and wicked of human oppressions. He is not human if he does not think so, for he has at the back of his mind the unrestricted competition of his own society, and the principle that each is for himself, and imagines that while, like the slum dweller, the untouchable is oppressed and neglected, the latter has not open to him the opportunity of rising to a high level of comfort. Here again he fails to understand the caste idea in all its bearings. He is told that the Pariah is denied the use of the village well and is horrified, but is ignorant of the fact that it is considered a duty by the high caste to draw water and keep it in the trough kept for the purpose for use by the untouchables. Whether untouchable or unapproachable, each community or caste in India has specific functions, and the Pariah or the Nayadi has certain customary rights which no high caste would dream of denying him. The village scavenger has a share in the grain heap at harvest time. He may have the duty of removing the carcass of dead cattle in the village.

Misunderstanding of the Foreign Critic

He eats the flesh which nobody else would touch, but the skin, which has a price, is his property. The degraded Nayadi, who stands a furlong from the high caste, is given oil for bath and then sumptuously fed at the feasts of the well-to-do. Whether these feasts are on the occasion of marriage, death or birth-day ceremonies, no feast is considered as complete where the untouchables or the unapproachables are not fed. These details are sufficient to show that even the most degraded low caste had a specific share, however small, in the wealth of the community and had to perform in return for it a specific function, however humble. Small as the income may be, insufficient perhaps for any but the barest subsistence, it was assured to him, and he stood in no danger of being deprived of it. The deficiency in it was made good by the customary charity of the people, and no one in India even now is in the position of the slum dweller who could work but can find no work, who needs help but cannot find it, and who for any support has to exchange his independent life for the workhouse.

We have now to consider the standpoint, taken up by the reformers, that it is absurd that an untouchable, immediately on conversion to Christianity or Muḥammadanism, should cease to be so with the higher castes. That seems absurd enough, but only seems so. The individual, who by conversion has detached from the social and religious system of Hinduism, has detached himself at the same time from its

economic system as well, and become member of a community in which he may associate with his fellows drawn from different castes of different social position, and may gradually improve his habits and position by the stimulus of the contact so gained. On the ground that untouchability has ceased to be operative in regard to him, that his caste fellows should have the restrictions removed from them has as much force as the argument that because a servant or two in the household after leaving service has attained to a high position, the remaining servants should begin to sit at the table of the master for their meals. The position of the untouchable caste is as much an economic as a social position. And both are so interwoven that, without altering the one, the other cannot be changed. Unfounded as it is, the apprehension is general that any improvement from their degraded position might produce serious reactions that may disturb the existing equilibrium of society. An individual or two, or even a couple of families converting into other religions cause little disturbance, but a whole caste asserting a higher social position may, it is apprehended, prove a serious menace to the existing social order.

An Unsound Argument

The foreigner is apt to think that the features of untouchability which come to his notice are sufficient to destroy every shade of self-respect, and degrade the caste, cursed with it, below the level of human beings. So they would be but for the counteraction of factors which are less obvious, but which nevertheless tend to neutralise in a

great measure these evils. The sense of equality within the caste between the individuals composing the caste, and the share each member has in the management of caste affairs in which no outsider, however superior his position, may interfere, act as so many buffers against tyranny and oppression of higher castes. It has already been mentioned that castes who discharge humbler manual functions of the community may bring the higher castes to their knees by strikes, or by the threat of wholesale migration. Such threats have been made and carried out, and the higher castes had to yield to the terms demanded. These are extreme measures. There are numerous other occasions, however, in which without the good-will of the lower castes, the higher caste men may soon find themselves in very difficult situations.

Sense of Self-respect Sustained

An untouchable caste has to cut the wood with which a member of a higher caste may be cremated. A member of the same caste has to supply the sprays of cocoanut blossom required for an important ceremony connected with marriage. The pollution period connected with the period of women in the same caste cannot be said to be over, unless clothing for change after the final bath of the last day of pollution is supplied by a washerwoman who is under the orders of an untouchable caste. One of the agricultural serfs has to bring the first sheaf to the granary of the landlord before it can be filled. The annual festival at certain temples cannot begin until an untouchable caste declares

it may proceed. Offerings to certain temples may not commence before an untouchable caste makes its offerings first. Numerous other incidents may be cited of a similar nature, where, at one stage or another in the course of a religious or social ceremony, a low caste, not necessarily an untouchable, has certain specific functions to perform, without which the ceremony is incomplete or invalid. The religious character of the ceremonies precludes the possibility of performing them in defiance, or in the absence, of the low caste concerned. The dead body of the high caste referred to would have to remain uncremated, till the wood cut by the low caste is available. The marriage ceremony referred to cannot proceed, unless the spray of cocoanut blossom is supplied by the low caste. It is obvious that on all these occasions the high caste concerned has to be conciliatory, and requires the goodwill of the low caste. The failure to perform a ceremony in the right way may entail excommunication. The low caste, whose authority over the washerwoman extends so far as to interdict her from supplying a change for the high caste woman in pollution, may cause her and her family to remain outside the pale of caste, for the violation of its command. These are considerable powers in reserve with the lower castes to which they may resort in revenge for any serious violation of the rights and privileges to which they have been accustomed. The consciousness of this power goes a great

Instructive Instances

way to minimise the reactions on their character and personality of their degraded position in the community. It would astonish a stranger to India to hear the words used occasionally by scavengers to householders to point out their duty of keeping their back-yards clean. Beggars may be heard lecturing housewives on the duty of charity, and warning them against the sin of sending them away without alms. We hear of Swiss guides, in Alpine ascents unceremoniously kicking across deep chasms the traveller who is too nervous to jump across by himself. Indian low castes do not go that far, but, in asserting their rights, in resenting offensiveness of one kind or another, and even drawing attention to lapses from correct behaviour or conduct—not necessarily as regards themselves, they use words and expressions which no one would dream of hearing from men or women in so low a position.

Revealing a Sense of Privilege

The customs described above indicate that there is a sense of interdependence between high and low among castes. But the interdependence is as between individuals and the larger dependence as between castes as a whole. The very organisation with each caste having a different exclusive position implies it in the highest degree. Any caste could, by refusal to discharge its function, bring the social machinery to a standstill, and therefore use that power against infringement of its rights and privileges. Agriculturists, who found a tax oppressive, may secure its abolition by the threat of

Broad Sense of Inter-dependence

throwing up their land, or of migration. In the past, on many occasions, people have deserted the plains in a body to dwell in the jungle, until brought back by a promise to redress their grievances. Castes have migrated from one kingdom to another. Four artisan castes of Malabar once migrated to Kanchi in a body, and are said to have been brought back by the grant of special privileges of which they are in enjoyment to-day.

A still higher interdependence is reached, when, on occasions of national importance, the lower castes have a share in the duties connected with it along with the higher castes. The car at the famous temple of Kanchi just mentioned is taken in procession on the occasion of the annual festival through the surrounding streets by a caste of weavers. No other caste may do it. On one occasion, one of the Government officers, who was required to be present on the occasion, happened to rebuke the leader of the caste for delay in starting the procession, at which he took offence. The caste in a body refused to do their office, until the Deputy Collector went to the house of the head casteman and offered an unqualified apology. An untouchable caste in Malabar has to come in procession with offerings and place them before the temple for the festival to begin. At the Melkote temple, the chief temple of the Sri Vaishnava Brahmins, one of the days of the annual festival is allotted to the untouchables for their worship, and the day following, it is purified for use by the higher

Privilege and

castes. Important items in public festival or ceremony may thus be the prescriptive right of a low caste. The interdependence and co-operation of castes involved in these go a great way to restore, in some measure, the self-respect among the lowest and poorest of Indian castes by fostering the idea that they are part and parcel of society. But there is little in it to develop to a sense of equality of status or equal responsibility, at least in certain spheres, to facilitate joint action. Interdependence being the result of differentiation of function negatives the idea of common action. The responsibility to supply specific needs by special castes should not be at the expense of responsiveness to the call to common action. When a society as a whole is threatened, as by foreign invasion, it should spring to action as a whole rather than any special community thereof, and the more so when the aggression is threatened by a people among whom military enterprise is not the exclusive function of a caste. There is reason to believe that, in the earlier days of Hindu evolution, people responded as a whole to common needs. It is on record that Hindu women of all castes parted with their jewellery as their contribution towards the expenses of war against a threatened invasion. But, as caste hardened under the dominance of the static Brahmins, the responsiveness to common danger weakened, and war of offence and defence came to be looked upon as a duty of the king and his army rather than of the people as a whole.

Joint Action

The most important function of the State is the maintenance of its integrity and its preservation in peace as well as in war, and the readiness of the individual to perform his duty in that connection is most vital to citizenship. If, under communal organisation, the individual could not have developed it, each community must have had that sense of citizenship perfected, by association in common endeavours, in all matters which had to do directly with the security and maintenance of the State to which they belonged. Under caste the sense atrophied rather than developed. A performance of specific items in elaborate ceremonials by different castes emphasised a sense of their interdependence in society, but emphasised at the same time the distinct identity of each, which is fatal to common action. Had there been in the life of the people occasions in which all shared equally in some common duty which engendered a common sense of unity among all the castes, however different they might be, they would have sprung to common efforts when threatened with a danger common to all. An obligation to military service on the part of a percentage, however small, of each caste, no matter what its position was in the social scale, would have developed the consciousness of citizenship, and developed its horizon beyond caste and village to the limits of the State itself.

Weak Citizenship

The identity of interests should not have been obscured by the differentiation of function.

Degrading customs, whether originating within the caste or imposed on it from without, would not have long survived the healthy association with higher castes in so vital a function as the protection of society, and castes would have gradually approximated, no matter what their functions in caste was, to an equality of status and responsibility. An approximation to a common status would alone save caste from the charge of social injustice. The high caste Brahmin is apt to argue that caste presents no more than a differentiation of functions in the social organism and that the differentiation makes for functional efficiency. He is apt to point to the existence of castes in animal communities as the Ants and Bees. That is true enough but only up to a point, for even the function of reproduction is restricted to a special caste among such insects.

Social Injustice.

Even with differentiation so much in excess of that of man under caste, there is in the animal communities a much closer association of the members. There is no instance of a caste among animals nearer to man than the mammals wherein species like the beavers all co-operate with one another on a feeling of perfect equality. Analogies from lower animals do not, therefore, help to justify by any means the treatment of human beings worse than lower animals. That a Brahmin may pass unpolluted a pair of buffaloes standing in the field, but not the human being that drives them, is a custom that does violence to every sense of common humanity. It

is true that the lowest castes in India are unclean in habit and addicted to practices, which more advanced communities have a right to abhor, but before penalising them for these, the higher castes have to ask themselves the question how much they have exerted themselves to refine these out of them to a higher and cleaner level of life. We have seen the economic danger apprehended in a reform process of the kind.

The differentiation of function in a community is alright. But the differentiation is by the high castes and they took care to see to it that they assigned to themselves the more intellectual and the more refined of the functions in society. In their distribution they were clearly guided more by their self-interest. No people have the right to assert that, because the races they conquered are at a lower level of civilised life, they should remain at that level for eternity. On that ground, therefore, the British would be justified in retaining, in their present position, the millions of this country for all time to come. Had the Aryan conquerors of India released forces in society on the scale that the British have done, the lower castes might have gone forward, and reached the Aryan level instead of remaining submerged far below the surface of Hindu society. The whole object of Aryan policy was, on the other hand, to reconcile each caste to the position it was assigned in the community, no matter how degraded, and to sterilise the lower strata of every fermenting social enzyme.

Forces of Self-interest

Social efficiency may require that each caste or class is given a specific function in the community, but social justice demands that no function assigned to a community is degrading, or degraded, or brings obloquy to the caste which discharges that function. Equality of status to all castes must have been the ideal towards which the whole superstructure of castes should have moved. Had military obligation rested on every caste, however high or low, it should have helped to bring castes on a common level, and the lower would have gradually levelled up to the position of the higher. Apart from universal military obligation, the Brahmin should not have remained content with tackling on communities one after another to Hindu society, much as the case-worm does of improving and expanding its shelter by adding small particles from time to time, but should have considered it a duty to make more strenuous effort at reform and improvement than the maintenance of a high spiritual and moral standard in the isolation of his caste. We have seen the economic and political factors that were responsible for the failure of the Brahmin to reach up, to an ideal so high, far higher than any that has been reached anywhere in the World by any class. No blame can attach to the Brahmin for falling short of so high and exalting an ideal. His is the credit for devising a social system in which different races, however barbarous

Correctives

And Brahmin Responsibility

or uncivilised, have a place although humble in society, and where they can share equally along with all others the conviction that they are on the same high road to moral and spiritual evolution.

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6. CASTE—DISCIPLINARY

Continuity of Environment, Reinforced by Heredity—Defects in Modern Educational Organisation—Excellences of Caste Education—Decay of Art-craft due to other Reasons—Hindu Resistance to Alien Forces, Islam and Western Forms of Civilisation—Prevention of Chaos.

THE education under Caste-Organisation may now be considered. The essence of Caste is that much the larger part of the environment of the individual is his caste, and it continues to be the same throughout life. It has been so for all that went before him, and it is going to be so for the descendants that are to come after him. That continuity in time and space is a powerful factor in fixing aptitudes and inclinations. It gives the greatest scope for the reaction of the environment to leave its impression on the individual for ever, not to be effaced by the accidents of temporary associations. Heredity operates in the same direction through a long succession of generations to reconcile one to his caste profession, and to develop his innate capacity and aptitude for it, when the son grows up as an apprentice of the father and learns from his lips the details of his profession. The foreigner is apt to look upon this system as very little different from the

Continuity of Environment

apprenticeship that obtained in the West. There are, however, very important differences. The apprentice of the West had usually no hereditary connection with the profession with which he became connected. There was no inherited disposition to develop his capacity. The atmosphere was limited to the workplace, and did not pervade the whole community in which he moved and lived. All that he had in favour of the profession was his choice of it, as far as it was voluntary and not determined by parents or influenced by the conditions prevailing for the moment. An apprentice of this kind brings to the profession but a fraction of the inclination and aptitude which an Indian brought to his caste profession.

Reinforced by Heredity

We may argue from the standpoint of individualism, the standpoint that the Western observer instinctively adopts, that the individual who has a distaste or aversion to his caste profession has nevertheless no choice but the pursuit of his father's profession.

That is so. But to condemn it on that ground is to condemn the negation of individualism involved in caste, not the principles of education involved in it. Influence of heredity and environment, and if these are not enough, religious and social theory conspire to incline definitely and instinctively the boy to the profession of his father.

The modern method of education in which students come to a common course from all classes and conditions of society by individual choice or inclination may be all right, and perhaps the only

method in an individualistic society dominated by machinery; but there is considerable educational wastage involved. There is too little of inherited disposition or influence of environment to co-operate with, or facilitate the training required. The period of education may vary from ten to fifteen years, during which the pupil is unable to contribute to the earnings of the father by his effort. On the other hand, he is dependent on the father, and has to draw large allowances in the shape of fees and boarding charges. The general foundation, required to help him in his choice of a profession, occupies a substantial portion of this period, varying from 6 to 10 years, and it is a large slice taken off from the average life of the individual which is about 23 in India, and double that in the West. Furthermore, the whole implication of modern education is that the mind of the student fresh to the school is as clean as a clean slate. This theory violates every known law of heredity, and ignores the influence of the environment. On the other hand, science would uphold the principle of Indian education that education is as much *ante* as *post* natal, and heredity and environment may be made to conspire to predispose the mind to the training the boys have to receive in life.

Defects in Modern Educational Organisation

No relation however intimate between teacher and pupil, or master and apprentice, can reproduce the vital personal touch between father and son, or the *guru* and his disciple. There is little or no loss in education of the kind, no

wastage arising from the numerous conflicts of inclinations and aptitudes, of ambition and necessity, between the home and the school or the University, and little of the stereotyping or of the uniformity of standards, but, on the other hand, there is a precision, a greater delicacy, and far more insight in the training when it is given by the father to his son, or what comes to nearly the same thing, the *guru* to his disciple. Under no other method can be given in such perfection the final strokes and touches that give finish to education. Traditional knowledge has clustered around it, associations, stories and anecdotes which have a far wider range of appeal. These are so many roads through which knowledge gains access to the intellect, and what is learned does not pervade or suffuse the intellect alone, but filters down to become part of the personality. With no training in the elaborate preliminaries in drawing, there are thousands of Hindu women who are able to produce, and produce neatly and gracefully, intricate patterns that astonish the observer by their grace and beauty and scheme of colouring. The sandalwood carver, or the inlay worker in wood or metal has had no substantial training, but nevertheless produces works of art of astonishing beauty and excellence, of marvellous delicate carving and decorative effort. In the skill and dexterity which these castes, ordinarily poor and indigent, exhibit, there is a measure of the advantages of caste-education, and one can realise how the Brahmin

Excellences of Caste Education

Pandit could commit to memory texts running over two hundred thousand lines, a feat by the side of which the memorising of the 20,000 lines of Paradise Lost by Lord Macaulay seems no more than the feat of a school boy.

The charge that intellect is divorced from crafts has little foundation. The master craftsmen were literate, and had open to them the *silpa sastras* to understand the principles of their craft. There are carpenters today who were never at a school, but who can discuss the suitability of a site for a house or a well with citations from the *sastras* in support of their view, and there is no reason to believe that in the old days things were different. As a matter of fact, the charge of a divorce of intellect from craft arises from the stereotyped character of latter-day art forms and patterns. This fault of Indian craft is a modern feature arising from the loss of patronage from Princes and the Nobility which master craftsmen enjoyed in the past. They look to the West for stocking their palaces with art treasures, and the genius of the master craftsmen has faded under the neglect. The commercialisation of Indian artware also has had its contribution to art deterioration, for the large scale production, required of the craftsmen, involved haste and therefore adherence to set patterns. Let these deleterious influences cease, and the genius of the craftsman would blossom again, for he has successfully introduced into his art the novel and wholly

Decay of Artcraft, due to other Reasons

unfamiliar ideas derived from the schools of Art established by the Government.

The features of caste, the spirit of co-operation and brotherhood are commendable in themselves, but to realise the level reached in each of these, and the help they have rendered, one has to envisage the problems arising from foreign conquest. Before the diffusion of an alien civilisation introduced by successive conquerors, the Afghans, the Tartars and the Mughals, and before the spread of an alien faith under the threat of death and religious persecutions or under inducements of favoured treatment, the ordinary defence such as most people set up would have given way, and all would have been converted and Islam should have submerged India as it submerged Persia, Afghanistan and practically the whole of Western and Central Asia and a great portion of Northern Africa. Temples were razed to the ground, whole communities were converted, discriminative taxes were imposed and the Islamic law superseded Hindu law in many an important respect, and yet Hinduism survived. The low and the degraded castes did not seek in any large numbers a religion so highly democratic as Islam. What Christianity was to the slaves of Rome, Islam might have been to the low caste Hindu, and yet Islam raised no social convulsions and had no great appeal to the low castes in India.

Hindu Resistance to Alien Forces —Islam

Passing on to the period of British rule we find the spirit, the ideals, the outlooks, and the standards

of the West brought home to people's minds through administrative and educative channels, and through the residence in the country of European merchants, officers Military and Civil, and the Missionary. We shall have occasion to go in greater detail into these vast currents of Western thought, cutting deep furrows throughout society. It is sufficient for our present purpose to realise that, in spite of Hindu civilisation being pressed from many sides, no more than a few hundreds of thousands have taken seriously to the ways of the West. And even these, not in matters which are the vital concerns of caste-discipline. The truth is that caste can still enforce its discipline on the Westernised individual, however high his position. The fear that one's caste fellows may not associate with him in the religious ceremonies he has to perform, or that his daughter or sister may not be sought in marriage suffices to bring the individual to his knees. Foreign trained young men with Western ideas on return refused to undergo the customary purification, only to find that the father-in-law would not send his daughter to live with him, or that he was left severely alone when invitations to feasts and festivals went round to his caste fellows. It is the dread of treatment like this that prevents members of a caste from going too far out of the way to adopt customs and habits which are known to be un-Hindu. That deterrent influence prevails in almost every grade of society so much so that the Hindus, as a whole, have so far

Resistance to Western Forms of Civilisation

successfully resisted the diffusion currents of alien civilisation.

Apart from this persistence of distinct identity, Caste is the one institution which helped to secure a fair degree of order and peace, when the country was subject to political confusion of the worst description. So long as the struggle was between Hindu kings, there was no disturbance to the productive efforts of the people. The cultivators and the artisans were left alone in the pursuit of their varied occupations. That is a phenomenon observed nowhere else in the World. When the English saw as late as the 18th century that, as battles were raging, the cultivators were ploughing in the neighbouring fields, they marvelled and wondered, and yet what they saw was but a survival of a universal feature in Indian warfare. It was when the Muhammadans came that we find for the first time villages devastated, granaries plundered, and houses set on fire. These features of war continued throughout the Muhammadan period for nearly a thousand years, and yet, we find up to the middle of the 18th century India continuing to supply distant markets, Indian merchants abroad and the people continuing without a break in productive effort. One has to contrast the picture with what happened in Europe during the Thirty Years' War and during the Napoleonic campaigns, the dreadful devastations, the varied dislocations, setbacks in productive effort, and the resultant wretchedness and poverty of the people to realise how valuable was the

Prevention of Chaos

service Caste had bestowed on a people, who have not known a national Government for a thousand years. Where the Governments did not exist or were too weak, caste *panchayats* dealt out justice, settled disputes, and carried on in fact all the functions of the administration. Under the close scrutiny of caste and its stern discipline, there was little chance for a general insecurity of life and property arising from the fierce passions of greed and covetousness, or the temptation to plunder and rapine, that are usually let loose when the Government ceases to govern and to command the respect and allegiance of the people.

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7. CASTE—DYNAMIC

Restricted Competition—East and West—Balance of Static and Dynamic Forces—Limited Play of the Will—Consequent Helplessness in Reform—But Broadened the Outlook—No Duality of Public and Private Virtues—'Thou shalt' and 'Thou shalt not'—The Priestly Intellect—The Brahmin Aristocracy of Intellect—An Early Warning Disregarded and Consequent Degeneracy.

WE shall now turn to the less obvious consequences of Caste organisation. We have seen that, under it, each caste had a specific sphere of duty assigned to it, and, in the exercise of which it was not interfered with. In determining his profession, the individual was therefore not subject to the restlessness and anxiety incidental to the choice of a profession.

Restricted Competition

If the door to progress beyond caste was closed, so was entrance to it from below. The rivalry within the caste was a rivalry between equals, or nearly equals in inherited aptitudes and capacity. There was thus assured a deeper tranquillity than is possible in a society, in which competition may have to be faced from individuals that may be drawn from any rank, with possibly superior resources and equipment. The rights and privileges

of a caste being assured to it free from violation, and it being impossible to add to them, it was not necessary to exercise vigilance to safeguard them, and, being freed from that anxiety inevitable in competitive societies, the concern of the caste was only the discharge of its duty. It made for the development of a wholesome atmosphere of mutual trust between caste and caste, no matter how far apart, and the establishment of relations marked by good feeling on both sides, such as is impossible when the service obtained or performed is a mere privilege claimed, or an asset surrendered.

East and West

It has been pointed out elsewhere that in Western society, the dominating principle being unrestricted competition, the individual is so much concerned with the maintenance or improvement of his position that he had to exercise vigilance and cultivate a high degree of efficiency, for without these he may lose in the struggle that pervades the whole society. Being concerned more with what he has to get than what he has to give, he has little to gain from the cultivation of the understanding. He perfects, therefore, rather the intellect and the will, which are the instruments on which he has to rely for success. Hence arises the distinguishing feature that, whereas in Indian society the self tends to be suppressed and subordinated, in the West it is sharpened and strengthened by the freer play allowed to it in the family and in society. We have thus, on the one hand, the development in greater perfection of selflessness, charity and sympathy,

hospitality, love and the family ties, and, on the other, of efficiency, assertiveness and alertness.

The only group in which the latter set of virtues existed in their perfection were the Kshatriyas, and the standards they set in them would have been of the highest value to the community as a whole. Their disappearance made a well-balanced development of character impossible in India, and we have had an exaggeration of the other set of virtues to the detriment of vigorous individuality and personality, and to the enslavement of the people. This is the reverse of the situation in which the West finds itself today where, under the growing irresponsiveness to priestly influence, the militaristic virtues have stepped beyond the bounds of reasonable development to make society aggressive, greedy, and almost defiant of humanistic ideals. In India the complete domination by it of Hindu society rendered it static, and deprived it of its capacity for self-adjustment under changing conditions.

Balance of Static and Dynamic Forces

Each caste wedded to its hereditary profession, the range of volitional activity was confined necessarily to the narrow limits and familiar routine of customary duties. Novel, complex or difficult situations to be faced were few, where the exercise of the will would have perfected it as an instrument of action. In this respect unrestricted competition is an advantage, for the dynamic forces, which it sets up, create, from day to

Limited Play of the Will

day, strange and unfamiliar situations in which habitual rules of conduct and behaviour are of no avail, and the demand on the intellect and will is greater and more continuous.

Nothing strikes so much the student of social institutions in India as the gradual appearance of social evils growing in magnitude, and the helplessness of the people to remove them. There are hundreds of religious observances and ceremonies involving suffering to man and beast, but no reformer rose to denounce them. *Sati* came to be a duty of the childless widow, and the awful spectacle was enacted daily in India for several hundreds of years without so much as a protest. It may perhaps be explained that these customs and practices were not inconsistent with the Hindu idea of physical suffering, voluntarily inflicted as a means of spiritual evolution, and its attitude towards this life as but one of many to be lived on this earth. But no explanation would be complete which does not lay stress on the atrophy of volitional effort.

Consequent Helplessness in Reform

But if intellect, by long association with duties become instinctive and mechanical, failed to act in situations unforeseen or unfamiliar, it was not lost. There was no incessant work, or any lack of leisure, for it to be completely absorbed. It was available to develop and perfect the understanding, and for the development of those large perspectives in which the Indians viewed this life and its happenings. The foreign

But Broadened the Outlook

observer who has had occasion to talk to humble village folk, illiterate and ignorant in the accepted sense of the words, marvels at their philosophy of life, and at their breadth of outlook which, in simple unsophisticated language, they may be drawn to expound. That is some compensation, for the absorption of the intellect in the West in the continuous self-adjustment, necessary under unrestricted competition, renders it unavailable for the cultivation of the very same qualities, which, more than education, more than even the sense of equality, draw man unto man in mutual helpfulness and trust.

Another effect of caste is the prevention of an artificiality in life and manners. The close association of caste fellows, which it necessitates, subjects the individual to a searching scrutiny, which enforces the sincerities of life and faith, purity of motive and a stricter concord between word and deed. In societies divided into classes the intimate knowledge of the individual is not ordinarily available to his circle to subject his motives to a searching analysis, and judgment is based more on his acts than on his motives. So long as his acts are helpful to society, or at least not harmful, the motive behind it is not analysed overmuch. He can, therefore, under cover of a likely benefit to society, advance his own interest. It makes for the material progress of society, but it tempts the individual to an artificial life in public, in harmony with the requirements

No Duality of Public and Private Virtues

of society perhaps, but not necessarily consistent with the private character of the individual. It should ordinarily make for hypocrisy, but is saved from that consequence, ruinous to moral excellence, by a private life in which the poses and make-ups required for public life are laid aside, and his own true nature shows unaffected and pure in the more subdued and softened light of the Home. It is a duality of life, nevertheless, subject to the incidents implied in duality. Under Caste this dualism is not possible. The purity and selflessness enforced under the obligations of the Joint family have to be maintained under the scrutiny of caste, and influence is sustained and continuous towards the growth of a personality in which culture, understanding, selflessness and charity are the dominant traits.

'Thou shalt' and 'Thou shalt not'

The control of the self is thus the dominant feature of the individual. We do not find the stress laid on action. The self being repressed, intelligence is not clouded to obscure correct lines of action, and the individual may be trusted to follow a course of life in harmony with the ideals of society. Under Caste the field for effort and action lay clear and well-defined, without the complexities and obscurities which arise from the jealousies and covetousness engendered under free competition. The interaction of these forces was reduced to a minimum, and there were not the limitless combinations of circumstances to bewilder or dishearten man, or for him to require guidance and

enheartening. The refinement of the individual to the level of humanism, required to discharge the obligations to the Joint family, Caste and society, was therefore the primary concern. In the West the individual had the whole field of society for his ambition, not any specified part of it, and he was allowed the free exercise of his faculties, subject to his obligations to society. 'Thou shalt not', takes the place there of the more positive injunction 'Thou shalt'.

The duties assigned to each caste were in the physical plane. But the office of the Brahmin, the spiritual guide of the people dependant on their charity, did not demand bodily exertion, and released from that necessity, there was danger of his physical frame deteriorating and his intellect losing itself in idle speculation. It is true that his priestly functions and the problems, arising from contact with or from absorption of inferior races and tribes, were of grave complexity, demanding his assiduous attention. But priestly functions tend to be mechanical, and solutions, based on the one formula of his predominance in society, were to that extent easily reached. His whole philosophy and the principles of his caste organisation and religion made for adjustment and reconciliation. While that very principle made for elasticity of the intellect and its resilience, it created at the same time grave problems for the intellect to maintain its integrity and retain its high level.

The Priestly Intellect

A spirit of superiority, safeguarded by privileges and high standard of living, and, above all,

political power such as an aristocracy enjoys, creates no difficult problems of intellectual or class integrity. It is too much hedged round and protected from contacts with lower classes and lower levels of thought to have any apprehensions of its distinctive features being lost in those of society as a whole. But the Brahmin as a rule sought no such advantages. The sanction for his privilege did not lie in military powers, but in the religious sentiment of the people. His life was one of comparative simplicity. The political power he wielded was through the king he served, and the elasticity of Hinduism precluded the possibility of a conflict between the Church and the State. He could, therefore, develop only into an aristocracy of intellect, and to maintain that position it was imperative that his caste should be most rigidly exclusive, and that he himself should maintain his intellectual faculties at the highest vigour and acuteness.

The Brahmin Aristocracy of Intellect

This high level could not be maintained long. The disappearance of the *Kshatriyas* left too wide a hiatus between him and the people. In the absence of close contact with a caste as acute and as refined as himself, but superior to him in its dynamic character, he was left to his own resources. The early warning that he should avoid settlement in Sudra kingdoms was based on the fundamental principle of Hindu organisation, that the Brahmin and the Kshatriya represented the two vital forces in society, spiritual and temporal, static

An Early Warning Disregarded

and dynamic, which had to check each other to prevent either or both from stepping beyond the reasonable requirements of society. For the maintenance of a proper balance, both the castes had to be on the same intellectual and moral level. A weakening of the one would have made for the undue predominance of the other. The Hinduisation of India should not have been attempted by the Brahmin alone, but with the aid of the Kshatriya. The Kshatriya should have settled first as the conqueror, and the Brahmin should have accompanied, or followed him. The warning was in the highest interest of Hindu organisation, but it was unheeded. His relations with the Sudra kings were of a superior, far too high in discipline and learning, whose kindly offices were required to refine their caste into a higher status. That was a position full of temptation to obtain privileges in return, temptation to lapse into lower levels of learning and discipline. Once the downward course started, the position attained by merit had to be safeguarded by privileges at variance with the true spirit of Brahminism. Ceremonies, rituals, and repetition of *mantras* tended to become mechanical. Discipline tended to degenerate into a routine of intellectual habits. We have, as early as the Buddha, a protest against Brahmin sacerdotalism. Under foreign invasion, conquest or domination, the degeneration went further, until birth and not the qualities became the sole claim to Brahminhood. What it meant to Hindu society was a gradual paralysis of the nerve centres, from

And Consequent Degeneracy

which the currents of refined thought and feeling had flowed to keep up the vigour and vitality of Hindu society. The whole tendency of inherited duties and continuity of environment was to develop inertia in regard to other duties which were not habitual or mechanical, and it needed all the vigour of thought of a highly intellectual caste and its own supreme efficiency to counteract that tendency. What the Brahmin could not resist himself came upon the other castes with overwhelming force.

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8. CASTE—REFORM

The Disintegrating Process—The Untouchables—The Non-Brahmin Movement—The Confronting Peril—An Unhealthy State—The Future—Danger of an Indian Under-World—Western Remedies Yet Experimental—Restoration of Status—Resuscitation of the Kshatriya—Universal Military Obligation.

THE more important features of caste having now been dealt with, we may now consider the condition in which this institution is today. It will be conceded on all hands that its hold on Hindu society is weakening. Not more than 30 per cent. are said to be faithful to their caste occupation. The rest have been forced to desert it, either from lack of opportunities in it or from the temptation of better opportunities elsewhere. In the new professions, the association and contact is with individuals drawn from different castes and different places, and interests no longer follow caste lines. The Joint family, so fundamental to caste, is breaking up under the pressure of poverty, the operation of judge-made law, and as a result of the decay of religious beliefs, and the individual therefore feels less constrained to respect its status

The Disintegrating Process

or obligations. The new ideas forced on or held up to the people through administrative, educational and missionary channels, and through the example of the rulers of the country are the very antithesis of all that caste stands for. Caste is thus being driven from its entrenchments back to its stronghold, *viz.*, the set of rules regarding interdining and inter-marriage, and even there, its position is weakened by many an instance of intercaste dining and intercaste marriage. Caste opinion has ceased to be operative in several matters and public opinion has yet to develop in vigour, and the individual, not afraid or respectful of either, consults too much his own convenience. The pace of society is thus being forced to an individualism oblivious of its responsibilities, but far too conscious of its rights. Brick after brick is thus being dislodged and removed from the old edifice, and thrown into confused heaps broken into fragments or disfigured, and there is danger of the whole structure collapsing, if the process continues.

The new forces pervade all ranks but are strongest at two points, the barrier between the Brahmin and the Non-Brahmin, and the still stronger one further down at the level of the untouchables. This latter class are as many as 60 millions. They, far more than others, have been under missionary influence. They have not been slow to perceive the great advance converts from them have made under missionary guidance and inspiration. The Ruling race, as a class

democratically inclined, have always extended to them their sympathy, and have been ready to lend their helping hand whenever an opportunity to do so arose, and, so assisted, several hundreds from among them have advanced to social position and influence which have enabled them to take full measure of the degradation of their fellow-caste men. In the new social order with its free competition and growing poverty, aggravated by the dissolution of communal and Joint family bonds, the untouchables are likely to be the worst sufferers. For they can no longer look forward with confidence to the customary perquisites attaching to their position, as the higher classes are gradually feeling themselves relieved of their obligations to them. The long ages of ignorance and superstition and low living will prove a more serious handicap in the struggle for existence which free competition will force on the people. Official prestige and influence of members from among them would improve their status in the public eye, and a share in political privileges is the only guarantee to them that their physical energies are not exploited to the exclusive benefit of the higher classes. The privileges of office and of political power may go a little way in redressing the present inequalities. The present revolt of the untouchables is against the social order, and their alliance with the Government is or ought to be only for the purpose of making the revolt effective.

The Untouchables

The Non-Brahmin movement has less justification. On the surface, it looks as though it is mere jealousy that has caused the present tension. The position which the Brahmin occupied as the custodian of Hindu literature, Law and Religion has enabled him to take advantage of the opportunities of Western education, and fill the ranks of the subordinate Government service almost to the exclusion of the other castes, whose leanings towards trade, cultivation or craft did not facilitate so easy a transference of inherited aptitudes. The *Kayasthas* of Bengal, who were in a similar position, have effected as easy a transition from the position of scribes to the community to that of scribes to the Government. Brahmin monopoly was a natural result proceeding from natural causes. It is true that, once having gained the position, they have tried to keep out other castes, and the acerbities of Non-Brahmin agitation have to be attributed to it. The position of a Government servant has, in India, always been looked upon with no small reverence and awe by the people. The complexities of Revenue Administration and unfamiliarity with law and procedure, as introduced by the British with their ignorance of the vernaculars and generally of the ways and habits of the people, gave to the Indian official of even lower ranks a power and prestige before which even the Indian nobility had to bend. The glamour of Government service was bound to draw to Western education classes other than the Brahmin, and there was bound to arise a

Non-Brahmin Movement

demand for a share in the loaves and fishes of office, which the Brahmin had long annexed to himself. The demand has been pressed forward with considerable bitterness of feeling, the more so because the Brahmin, partly from inherited aptitude and partly from the long start he had, was able to keep to himself what he had long enjoyed. The attempt of the Brahmin to retain his monopoly has been looked upon as though it is special to his caste. That, however, is a weakness to which any caste in that position is liable, so long as it has the cohesion of a caste. Not even the Indian Muhammadan or Christian is likely to escape it. For it is the very essence of a caste to be drawn together closely, and caste bonds are far too strong to be easily overpowered by the impartiality that governs usually the policy of a neutral administration. Under caste the monopoly of one caste may be broken, but only to be replaced by the monopoly of another. Much of the animosity against the Brahmin is therefore unjustified, and proceeds from ignorance of the deeper causes.

The demand for adequate representation in the services is but one aspect of political awakening as well as of class consciousness. Political evolution in India has reached a stage when the foreign Government has decided to share its responsibilities with the people, and it is important to consider on whom they should devolve. The Brahmin was not in the enjoyment of any political power except as derived from the king

who, in Indian polity, was a Non-Brahmin, whether a Kshatriya or Sudra. The predominance of the Brahmin in the services and in the learned professions put him in a position of vantage, from which he could easily grasp for himself the power surrendered by the Government. In other words, there was the danger of his uniting in his own person the legislative as well as the executive functions. His past record was against such a union, and what is more, with sovereignty in foreign hands the danger was greater than when it was in the hands of a Kshatriya or Sudra king. It was natural that the Non-Brahmins, under these circumstances, should organise themselves so that political privileges given to the people did not fall exclusively into the hands of the Brahmin. Dominant in the services, he would have been too powerful if he became dominant in the legislature as well. There would have been a bureaucracy, Brahmin in composition and as formidable as the present one, which administers the law it itself creates. There was no guarantee that he would not use any privileges so obtained, to secure and maintain his position in society now threatened from many directions. Viewed from this standpoint, the awakening of the Non-Brahmins was not a moment too soon, and was for the re-assertion of a position which was theirs before the country passed under foreign rule, and which should revert to them on the attainment of Home Rule. Once the position is regained, the agitation against Brahmin

The Confronting Peril

predominance in the services is likely to subside.

That is a long way off yet. In the meanwhile the agitation is conducted on lines prejudicial to the harmony that should prevail in Hindu society. The Brahmin is looked upon as though he is an enemy of society. His enormous contributions to the civilisation and culture of India are forgotten for the moment. The Non-Brahmin to cast him out of his present position would cast him out of society. Nor is the Brahmin prepared to make any sacrifice. He considers his position in the past should be maintained to preserve Hindu society, but forgets how far he has fallen from the exacting standards he had set before himself once. His wonderful resilience of intellect has degenerated into subtlety. His self-control is become a dead habit and confined to the mere exterior. His higher qualities lost, Time is the sole ally left to him, and his reliance on it, as the solvent of his many difficulties, is almost pathetic. Within the very narrow limits set by caste regulations he has found ample means for the indulgence of animal appetites and passions. There are many stories current, indicative of popular contempt, of the distended Brahmin priest uneasy under an overloaded stomach. And yet the Brahmin would not reform, and regain his claim to the respect and consideration of the people.

An Unhealthy State

We have now to consider the future of caste. All will agree that it has to be ended or mended.

The abolition of caste is, however, a problem almost impossible of solution. The institution has so soaked into every fibre of the Hindu being, and there is so much of inertia that a new social order appears almost impossible of realisation, unless the fire of a tremendous ambition consume the habits and tendencies fixed by 20 centuries of continuous inheritance. The present circumstances of India, her over-population, the absence of all outlets for emigration, and the decay of religious beliefs would render an afflatus of that kind a fit of lunacy. A religious revival under the initiative and guidance of a prophet of magnetic personality, more like a God than man, or a fiery dictator may strike off the fetters of caste. There are no signs of a coming prophet or an Indian Mussolini. The only reasonable expectation is from a franchise based on wealth in a Self-Governing India, and the adjustments that would become necessary when the vessel has moved out of the sand banks, on which it has been cast, into deeper waters. For, the fresh contacts and interests, it would involve, may keep caste considerations in the background to recede ultimately from Hindu consciousness. That would take many a long day and many more, because attempts at revival are likely to be made.

The Future

Nor can one contemplate with equanimity the disappearance of the institution. The stress of free competition may prove too much under the tropical sun of India. It has already proved too heavy a strain for the Westerner with all the

vigour of his constitution and his climatic discipline.

Danger of an Indian Underworld

The rise in the population of individuals of unstable mind, in the number of suicides and of the neurasthenics in European countries is of very grave significance. With all their superior resources of wealth and of science and with the more uniform equipments of racial homogeneity, the West has not been able to abolish the Underworld, and one cannot be certain that the abjectly low life to which, under an easier climate, the Indian can descend, and the wholly unequal equipment inevitable in racial diversity such as that of India, will not produce an Underworld far more crowded than in the West and, what is more serious, far more resigned to its fate. We may see in the patient submission of 60 millions of untouchables for forty centuries the portent of what may be in store for India. If the unfit, who survive, ought to be the primary concern of society, what will India do with the many millions who, unable to bear the stress and strain of stark competition, may descend to the Underworld? We shall have, in the meanwhile, let loose all the selfishness, the excitements and passions, now kept under wholesome check, with which the more advanced races may take unfair advantage of the deficiency in equipment mental, moral and physical of the inferior races in India, which common education, and what is called equality of opportunities in the West will not level up to the requirements of a fierce struggle for existence. The inequalities will be

there greater than now, and far less tolerated because Indian humanism which, if not now, at least in the past, softened the rigours of caste will have been lost, and the classes that go down in the struggle would look upon themselves as victims, and not as partners, be it in however humble a capacity, of society.

Of other principles that are now sought to be introduced into Western society to moderate the struggle and humanise the individual, there are some that appeal to India as involving co-operation rather than competition, but the processes of transformation have hardly commenced to make one sure how far they would succeed, and, if they succeed at all, whether the transformation would not ultimately impart to Western society the more vital of the principles of Hindu society. There is the more reason for thinking so, because there is increasing recognition on the part of Western thinkers that the formula of a common equality, as a basis of social progress, is unworkable in the face of the wide range in difference in equipment moral, intellectual and physical between man and man, and, if worked in defiance of stern facts, would ultimately make for a dead level of uniformity.

Western Remedies Yet Experimental

We may next turn to the consideration of the question whether caste can be mended so as to deprive it of its present undesirable features. The most reprehensible part of it, what differentiation of functions ought properly never to carry with it, is the progressive lowering of status

corresponding to what is considered to be inferior callings. No humiliation or degradation should attach to any function of society as such. The scavenger should not merely have the right but be assisted to live a life as clean as the rest of society. Association with the rest of the castes should not be denied to him on the score of his profession. The notion, that contact or association with a lower caste is prejudicial to the spiritual evolution of the people, should be dismissed as a superstition. It is a poor spirituality that would prescribe *purdah* to the soul. Sympathy, forbearance and understanding towards the lowly and unclean set up vibrations as wholesome as the intercourse of equals.

Restoration of Status

A second requirement is the creation of a class that will correspond in duties and responsibilities to the Kshatriyas of the past. The most virile and intelligent elements in every caste should join together to constitute that caste, and it should take over the military leadership of Hindu society. It may seem a fancy impossible of realisation. But Hindu society without a caste of functioning Kshatriyas is, as already stated, like the hand with the thumb amputated. A Kshatriya caste must be formed. Whether it should draw the best individuals from other religions is a question to be considered. In the example set by Akbar of taking wives from among Rajput princesses may be seen his attempt to draw into a closer union the Mughals and the Kshatriyas, and through

Resuscitation of the Kshatriya

that union to reconcile Hindus and Muhammadans. A similar attempt to reconstitute a Kshatriya caste represented from all castes would give it a physical and mental vigour, and a dynamic character that would qualify them for the leadership and guidance of India. Association with it would revitalise the Brahmin and elevate his equipoise and balance, now maintained by compromise of principle or helpless forbearance, to a level where character and conviction remain strong and unaffected. Along with the formation of a Kshatriya caste, should be laid on each Hindu family, however low, the obligation of dedicating for military service the most physically fit of its members, whose maintenance in that profession should be its concern. With these two reforms Hindu society may regain its old vigour and supremacy.

Universal Military Obligation

9. RELIGION

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IF the essential features of caste set forth in the previous chapters have been followed, it would not be difficult to understand the main features of Hinduism. The Western observer accustomed to a faith, simple and clear in its outline, looks for a similar clearness of outline in Hinduism, and is bewildered to find that it is, on the other hand, a vast miscellany of creeds and superstitions. He has, however, only to recall that Hindu society is as much a miscellany of races to realise that what he sees in

religion is but a reflex effect of it. A society that has within its fold races in varying stages of intellectual, moral and spiritual level, if it is to hold together, must have a religion suited to requirements so varied. If the monism of the *Vedanta* and the animism of the wild tribes represent the extreme limits of Hinduism, and these appear as having little in common except as the final terms in a long evolutionary series, let it be remembered that the Aryan Brahmin and the Negroid aboriginal are equally the first and the last terms in a racial series.

A Miscellany Reflex

When the Aryans sang their beautiful hymns in the Land of the Seven Rivers they had a zest for life, and their Gods were not different from the gods of the Greeks, and were Gods that were human in their traits and passions. They had their enemies in Heaven, as men had theirs in the World below. One should have expected a development of Indian thought in the direction of a Dualism of Good and Evil, or of God and the Devil, as in Semitic and Western thought, and it should have been found reflected in the people in an uncompromising attitude of rigid exclusiveness against all who were not of them by race, language or custom. They should have considered themselves, as the Semitic, the Jewish and the Western races considered themselves, as the elect, the chosen of God and all others as followers of the Devil and representing evil, and

Situation of the Early Aryans

therefore to be kept outside the pale of society to be exterminated.

A credal religion as Judaism, Christianity or Muhammadnism is a crystallised conception which can originate only among peoples who are racially homogeneous, or who have the unity of common customs, traditions and institutions. Religious reformers or prophets arising from among them, as a rule, do not attack directly their institutions, but trust to the reformation of the individual, resulting from adherence to their doctrines, to exert wholesome reactions on the social fabric. Any frontal attack would seriously diminish the chance of acceptance of the new doctrine. Indeed, its antagonism to existing customs and usages need only be implicit for the message to be repudiated, and the prophet to run the risk of his life. It is therefore a wise policy on the part of religious reformers to leave the existing social system well alone. When, however, their object is not the religious reform of a single tribe alone, but also the fusion of many tribes under different or conflicting customs and in varying degrees of mutual jealousy or hostility, the reformer cannot rest content with the reformation of the individual. He has to persuade the people to accept, along with his doctrines, a set of new customs and institutions, in which those doctrines find full expression, to ensure that the adherence of his followers, drawn from different tribes to the new creed, is not weakened or lost by the

The Reformers' Usual Task

conflict of customs and habits among his flock. The task of the Founder of Islam was of this high complexity.

The problem before the Aryans in India was of very much greater complexity. A principle of unity had to be discovered to hold together, in one polity, a bewildering miscellany of races and creeds, and make them converge to common ends. Like vessels, large and small, opening out their sails to catch the ocean wind, each progressing fast or slow according to the number and size of its sails but all moving forwards in the same direction, the races of India had to be swept forward, saved from mutual collision, by the universal appeal of a fundamental truth. That truth had to be religious in complexion. Buddhism spread over the country with startling rapidity, because it avoided a conflict of creeds by the greater emphasis it lay on conduct, but it failed ultimately because of its agnosticism. The unity of a common code of morality would not have sufficed in the long run. The creeds strung together on a common thread was a far better solution, but even that by itself would not have advanced Indian unity very much. The sense of the universal was likely to be lost in the sense of the particular, unless it was reinforced by a social theory and an economic doctrine which reconciled conflicting interests, and gave to the conglomeration of Indian races the beauty and symmetry of a mosaic, and these were nourished and grew together in a

Complexity of Aryan Objective

common matrix of philosophy. Hinduism is not merely a religion, it is a civilisation, it is a mode of life.

We shall now go a little more in detail over the problem, briefly sketched above. On proceeding further eastwards from the Punjab, the Aryans found that it was impossible to maintain their attitude towards the coloured races on lines of rigid exclusion, and that they had to come to arrangements by which, while preserving their own identity distinct and inviolate, the identity of each of the tribes was at the same time respected. We have seen how it led to the formation of castes. We saw too that to introduce cohesion into a society so constructed of a succession of links in a continuous chain, close interdependence was necessary, and that the interdependence was secured by a differentiation of functions. But the interdependence by itself would not have endured long, for the functions were not all of equal respectability, and there might have developed an antagonism as between the lower and the higher, if not between others. The association between castes, limited as it was, should nevertheless have been sufficiently frequent for mutual reactions on thought and behaviour to take place, and for the ultimate reduction of all to a common level, and the possibility was bound to be looked upon, by the more highly endowed of the castes, as ruinous to their position in the community. The lower castes, on the other hand, would not have been human if they did not entertain at any time the idea that their

A Corresponding Complex Pantheon

own religious beliefs were as high as those of the higher castes, and any assertion of that claim would have made for antagonism and struggle. It was necessary, therefore, to weave all the various superstitions and beliefs into one pattern. The truth reached early in the *Upanishads* that 'God is one, but that sages called It by various names' laid open to the Gods worshipped by each caste the gates of the Hindu Pantheon. The lower castes could not therefore nurse the grievance that their Gods had no place in Hindu religious beliefs.

Admission of the various gods to the Hindu Pantheon could not imply equality of dignity and worship. Equal rank to the Gods would have made for equal rank among castes. The unity pervading Hindu Gods could not have been an identity of rank, but the unity of an evolutionary series. On that principle alone could there be a gradation of Gods corresponding to the gradation of castes, each reinforcing the other. A mere declaration that they were so would not have been enough. The Aryan religion as revealed in the Vedas would not have sufficed to give an orderly arrangement, coherence and harmony to the tangled mass of doctrines, ideas and superstitions of the peoples admitted into the Aryan polity. It was necessary to purify and elevate it so as to embrace principles, which were sufficiently forcible to preserve from mutual collisions, and at the same time attract to them, much as the Sun does the planets, the

The Goal for Lofty Speculation

crude faiths of the lower castes. It is evidence of the high metaphysical acumen of the Hindus and their philosophical subtlety, that so complex a problem was solved satisfactorily. It has been said that Hindu speculation was a consequence of the malarial character of the *Madhya Desa* which created an aversion to work and a predisposition to contemplation. We do not hear of malaria in Italy producing a similar speculative turn in the Roman mind. It is doing but the barest justice to say that the profound speculations of the Upanishads are due to the resolve of the Aryans to find a unity underlying the faiths and superstitions to which they resolved upon giving recognition.

The Upanishads

The Aryan speculators dived deep down beyond the cruder faiths, deep down their own religion, and did not stop until they discovered the unifying principle of a universal soul pervading through all objective existence, but in varying stages of integration, the highest integration being reached only in man, in whom again, however, there were minor gradations depending on the degree of his absorption in, and attachment to, the World. The more the individual self was detached from the World, the nearer he was unto the universal soul or God. A speculation so profound and far reaching went beyond the immediate requirements of enduring affiliations with non-Aryan tribes; it embraced the animals, plants and all inanimate objects

in one limitless chain of graded perfection. Thus arose the pantheism of the Upanishads.

If the approach to identity with the Universal God depended on the degree of spirituality of the individual, it was necessary that the highest caste should be the most spiritual, and that, with each step down the social scale, the distance from God should become greater. The eventual leadership of society by the Brahmins was inevitable, but at the same time the other Aryan castes, the Kshatriya and the Vaisya, could not be denied access to the spiritual truths through rituals and disciplines, the practice of which made for the perfection necessary for the realisation of these truths.

Each caste living its own life, having its own beliefs, customs and superstitions distinct from those of other castes, its position would depend on the degree of spiritual perfection which its members were capable of producing in the caste. That would sufficiently explain the position which each caste was assigned in the social scale, but it would not reconcile it permanently to it. There was nothing to prevent a low caste, or a division of it, from reforming itself up to the level of the Brahmins, and claiming equal rank with them. Seeing that each had a distinct place in Hindu polity, such a shooting up was perhaps not practical politics, but a passion for assimilation might arise, causing no small disturbance to the equilibrium of society. When is a low caste to gain the level of the Brahmin? If it is to be achieved in a single life, it would have produced

Doctrine of a series of lives and Karma

an upward movement among the lower castes that might have jeopardised Aryan supremacy and Aryan exclusiveness, not necessarily by any spiritual equality actually attained, but claimed and asserted on grounds of real or imagined perfections. If life, once lived on the earth, is done with for ever and cannot be lived over again, the problems of life assume, as a result of a conception so narrow, an importance and an urgency demanding from man all the energy he can spare for them. Assume, however, that there may be a succession of lives in this World, the urgency and importance become diminished in the larger perspectives of thought: "In this life or never" yields place to the slogan "In this life or in one of the lives to come hereafter." That may not suffice by itself to reconcile a caste to its position in life. It may weaken effort: it may not take away the ambition to social equality. To do away once for all with the ambition, one has but to look upon one's lot in this life as the result of one's actions in a past life. If what is to be endured in this life is the result of one's own doing in a past life, and there is no escape from it, one is reconciled to what one has to face in this life. The Brahmin is what he is, because of what he was in a previous life. To imitate the Brahmin, with the load of past sins still on one, is not only futile, but ridiculous. Thus were castes reconciled to their position in life.

The doctrine of *Karma* satisfied all the requirements of Hindu social arrangements. It

presupposes a succession of existences in this World until the identity of the individual soul with the universal soul, obscured by attachment to the World, is re-established and realised. It bids the individual to do the task allotted to him in this life, and declares that the due performance of it will secure him salvation. It reconciles thus each caste to the duties it is allotted in society.

Karma, not Fatalism

We are apt to think that the *Karma* theory is very much the same as Fatalism. There is, however, a profound difference. In fatalism, what is believed is that the future is predetermined, and there is no suggestion whatever that it has any relation with the past of the individual. The future is ordained for him by an all-powerful God. The *Karma* doctrine, on the other hand, lays the responsibility on the individual himself. It reconciles him to the present. The future, even in this life, is in his power to modify. Astrologers, for example, advise the performance of meritorious actions to minimise the effect of, or avoid a threatened calamity, and various forms of charity, penance and worship are resorted to by the individual to atone for his past and prevent its consequences.

The conviction, that the sins of the present life have to be atoned for in a future life, is a powerful inducement to habitual right conduct. It impels the individual to measure the worth of his actions by a subjective, rather than an objective, standard. In the West, the value of an individual's

action is measured more by its effects on society. It is not a safe or a just criterion, as benefits can be conferred on society without the individual necessarily subjecting himself to self-sacrifice or even inconvenience; but it is a powerful stimulus to public good. Where, however, as in India, the worth of the action is determined by the amount of self-sacrifice and self-denial involved within the circle of family or caste, occasions can be found for actions, which have not been influenced by the temptation of popular esteem, or regard, or by other selfish motives.

Fatalism but a Phase

The view that fatalism of whatever character tends to produce a patient resignation to circumstances instead of the desire to overcome or modify them is logical enough, but has much more limited application than is usually supposed. There is more or less fatalism in all religions. The Christian doctrine, that one is born a sinner and habitual right conduct alone can secure redemption, is not far removed from the doctrine of *Karma*, even though the effort to be made is in one life and not spread over several. In spite of it, Western civilisation has achieved a splendour and magnificence such as no previous civilisation had. Islamic fatalism did not prevent the Semitic civilisation from making contributions to human thought which would last for all time. Their architecture, their palaces and tombs reach perfections as high as any that have been reached by any civilisation. There is a fatalism in Buddhism too, but the life during the

Buddhistic period, as revealed in the Ajanta paintings, testify to the joyous life which the people lived.

The truth is that fatalism and pessimism are features of society in its decadence, when circumstances have changed beyond human control. These theories are then revived from the neglect and obscurity in which they remained, and given their ascendancy in society. When society revives from whatever cause, they recede to the background. Whatever the effect of fatalism on man among the Hindus, the stimulus to effort could not possibly be taken away by it. Under caste and the Joint family, the usual pressure could be exerted on individuals with greater effect than in communities where the individual's relations with the rest of the members are not so close or intimate. Indeed, under the inherited aptitudes of caste and the influence of its environment and atmosphere, the individual's action was too mechanical and instinctive to be seriously influenced by the doctrine of *Karma*. Where caste interfered was when the individual, or the caste itself as a whole, laid claim to status and privileges which did not accrue from birth.

In revealing the policy beneath early Aryan speculations, it is by no means suggested that they rested on no other foundation. What a leading scientist of the standing of Sir Oliver Lodge, or a brilliant author of the reputation of Sir Conan Doyle has discovered is not inconsistent with the spiritual truths that the Aryans reached.

Deeper Foundations of Aryan Thought

Once grant the survival of human consciousness after death, as we must if the experience of these famous men may not be dismissed as the workings of an over-exercised imagination, human reason must grant the speculations reared on the conviction of the existence of a disembodied consciousness, as a logical sequence. If personalities may survive death, there must be grades of perfections among them determining their distance from the Universal Essence, and the taint of worldly existence may be the only bar to a final mergence in Infinite Existence. That the taint may be worked off in a rebirth or rebirths is but a step further. Science which has apparatus for testing only objective reality, crude even at that, has not the right to dismiss as idle speculations, without due inquiry, what may with more refined methods be proved to be truths, even though they are only within subjective experience. The discovery of a fourth dimension has run the past, present and future into one, and revealed the absurdity of these partitions which man has interposed to suit his convenience. The mental focus determines the past, present and future. The doctrine of a succession of lives acquires a new significance under the theory of Relativity.

Those who have not dismissed as of no significance, but paused to reflect on the astonishing sights they have witnessed in India, of snake charmers discovering by the dozen venomous snakes from inhabited and well-kept bungalows, of *yogis* rising in the air several feet above the

ground without support, of men with the contracted muscle of the forearm breaking granite slabs several inches thick, and of other feats too numerous to mention, cannot but come to the conclusion that these singular feats have been performed by alliance with forces which are beyond the human frame, and probably derived from space. The West is so absorbed in objective reality that it rejects these as impossible. For, any belief in these forces, outside its range of thought, may weaken its hold on what it considers to be Reality, and diminish its driving force. The West lacks the will to believe. The intense abstraction from the World and even from the physical body, which so many Hindu thinkers successfully attained, helped them to explore consciousness. And consciousness is the field which Eddington and others now recognise as likely to help men to probe deeper into depths of Reality, and to furnish them with the key to the mysteries of the Universe. It is likely that Indian Saints were, by this means, able to tap forces which are beyond the Westerner, to realise visions of the Unseen and to reach higher octaves of thought. What may appear therefore as mere social expediency alone in Indian doctrines may have a more enduring basis in the highest and most universal of Truths. The building may be secure for all practical purposes, if the foundations are deep enough. We may rest content. It may nevertheless be that,

Yet Unknown Realities

if we go deeper still, we may find them resting on solid rock.

We have now to turn to the consequences of these doctrines developed by the Aryans. They were all right so far as they helped to give a permanency to social arrangements by which the aboriginals were admitted into Aryan polity. That was a great thing to have done, considering that in other parts of the world differences in religious beliefs made not only for exclusion, but for violent antagonism. There could be no compromise between Good and Evil. What was therefore considered evil had to be exterminated, or destroyed. We know from European History how fierce religious persecutions were as a result. The Inquisition alone was responsible for the destruction, by fire, of more than 30,000 human lives. We come across in Islam instances of wholesale massacres in the name of Religion. In India, the so-called Dasyus of the Vedas were objects of Aryan hatred. But they had but to accept the Aryan social system as Sudras for systematic persecutions to cease. It is true that there were no relaxations of the colour bar, but it was no small achievement to have reached that higher level of humanism, which enabled the aboriginals to live as part and parcel of Hindu society, in a humble capacity no doubt, but in close interdependence and harmony.

Triumph of Aryan Tolerance

The *Karma* theory could not help their progress further. We have seen how, under it, the test of conduct became subjective rather than

objective. Under the changed attitude, the object of ambition also changed from material to spiritual; nor did the higher castes feel any responsibility towards the uplift of the lower. According to the Hindu view, all castes were on the high road of evolution, and the stage, reached by each in the long journey to ultimate perfection, was determined by the past *Karma* of the caste, and none but the caste itself could hasten the pace.

A second consequence of the presence of undeveloped tribes was in elaboration of ceremonial in matters of worship. The unwholesome reaction on Aryan thought, arising from the recognition of these as parts of society, had to be prevented. The pull downwards could not be allowed. How was intellect to acknowledge that the cruder beliefs had elements of truth in them and, at the same time, retain its hold on the more refined ones? Nothing but the strictest discipline could prevent a slide back to a less exacting level of thought. The discipline had to express itself not only in conduct, but to take shape in forms and formularies, sufficiently distinctive as well as refined and exclusive. An observance of these may or may not be a spiritual exercise, but it certainly helped to prevent the field of Aryan convictions from being swamped by the cruder beliefs of the lower faiths.

Ceremonial Disciplines

The rise of an elaborate symbolism was a third consequence. The only safe anchorage for the Aryans was the eternal and universal truths.

of their religion. Forms and formulæ were but accessaries. The perception of these truths beneath all forms of Gods and Goddesses and all faiths, however crude, could alone be the safeguard. What the aboriginals believed must be made to subserve the higher truths which Aryans believed, and this could be done only by a process of refinement of non-Aryan Gods and of their worship, and by resort to a subtle symbolism that, by alterations in details of figures and forms, could be made to convey a message.

Elaborate Symbolism

It may perhaps be questioned, as Sir John Woodroffe seems to do, whether there was any transmutation of the demons of tribal imagination to serve higher purposes, but it is a psychological impossibility that the repulsive shapes and forms of these, which presented such difficult problems, were not in the minds of Aryan thinkers when they sought to symbolise cosmic phenomena. The destructive side of nature appeared to Tennyson as 'red in tooth and claw'. It was equally natural to the Aryans, when they wanted to envisage the destructive forces of nature, to find ready to hand and therefore to employ the forms of devils and demons which the aboriginals believed to exist. A horrible looking Goddess like Kali thus retains all her repulsive features, but is made the vehicle of a sublime and difficult philosophy. The Gods of the non-Aryans thus continued to satisfy the requirements of the less advanced of the tribes, while conveying to the better intellects

Elevation of Crude Institutions

of the Aryans, philosophical concepts of a high order.

We may turn aside here for a moment to consider idol worship. The missionary, who spends so much of his eloquence on this Hindu practice, might well pause to reflect on the existence of images in Roman Catholic Churches, on the symbolism of the Cross itself and on the bread and wine at the mass, before he draws so freely on his denunciatory vocabulary. The lay Westerner too, who has no good word to say of idols, might consider what purpose the statues so commonly erected in the West serve, and the wreaths that are placed before them on certain occasions. If these are not beyond their comprehension, idol worship would cease to be the anathema that it is now. If anywhere in the World unwholesome tendencies in this mode of worship have been effectually prevented, it is in India. Most images are designed to help concentration of the mind. The initiate in *pranayama* or control of breath exercise is asked to concentrate on a large black spot. A ball of cow-dung, with a flower stuck in, may serve for purposes of worshipping God. When the worship is over, the dung is thrown away. Images of Kali, after worship and procession with music and illuminations, are consigned in Benares to the Ganges. So are images of Ganesa, after similar worship and spectacular displays, thrown in the nearest tank or river. For the more permanent images in temples there are elaborate rules of construction. Each has its

Idolatry

symbolism, and none, however carefully made, is fit for worship unless specially consecrated by elaborate ceremonies.

The multiplicity of images is primarily the result of the special benefit sought from the prayer offered, meekness, patience, consolation, courage or any of the other virtues. Images in the same form are not suited for prayers made for different ends. The meekness of the images of Christ does not square with the requirements of a soldier going out for battle. A Christ in armour would serve better. So for each mood there is an appropriate form. The Indian soldier worships Kali or Rudra, the Hindu wife worships child Krishna. The learned pray to Saraswati. Modern psychology would whole-heartedly support these specialised worships, and be it remembered that there is a unity underlying the varied forms that Hindu Gods are given.

Variety of Images

Aryan speculation did not stop with the discovery of an underlying principle pervading a multiplicity of forms. It went further in its spirit of universalism, and recognised no less than four different paths to God, suited to varying temperaments: whether through devotion, through love, through action or through knowledge each path led to God. The narrow view of most religions of the World that there was only one path and one alone, which made so much for religious persecution and for the travesty of propaganda, is foreign to Hinduism. The

Liberty of Conscience in India

comprehensive conception enabled Hinduism to view with more kindness and sympathy the varieties of faiths in India and the formation of new ones. We have seen how the Joint family facilitated the formation of a new caste by enabling a few families to separate and detach themselves from the main caste. A new cult or sect could be formed similarly, as a result of the potency of a new principle discovered. For, allowed to grow under the light and warmth of a comprehending universalism, it was not compelled to resort to subterranean methods to develop the suspicions, jealousies and hatreds, which are inevitable when faiths have to be nursed in secrecy and in dread of violent persecutions. In Hinduism, more than in any other religion, we come across the interesting and highly edifying spectacle of conversion to a faith not by persecution or the persuasion of the multitude, but by the victory gained by leading exponents over rivals as distinguished in religious discussions. We come across, very often, instances like Sankaracharya going through India, and proving in actual debates with leaders of Buddhism the superior merits of Hinduism. Occasions there have been when religious reformers have had to flee from the country and their followers have been persecuted, but these are very few, compared with what we find in the history of religious thought in countries of the West, and considering the size of the country.

The freedom of thought, which Hinduism allows, has its darker side as well. Freedom is

not a mere negation of restraint. There are well-defined limits beyond which freedom becomes indulgence, and these have to be discovered by trial and error. Between the Pantheism of the Upanishads and Atheism, the step is short and one could easily degenerate into another, and so it did among the schools of *Nyaya* philosophy. The *Charvakas* were growing very atheistic and they became a menace to religion. The theory of the origin of Buddhism, as a protest against the exaggerated ritualism of the Brahmins and their caste system, has been repeated so often that it has gained practically universal acceptance. It is nevertheless true that one of the main objects of Buddha was to win back to religion the *Charvakas*. The *Nirvana* of Buddha is not a blank void, a nothingness. The perfect transparency of glass and the absence of all reflection makes us doubt its existence. So we seem to see the top at rest, when it is spinning round with the greatest speed and perfection. To say that *Nirvana* is absurd is to say that the glass does not exist or that the top does not spin. Had Buddha emphasised God, it would have run the risk of leaving the dangerous school of *Charvakas* outside his influence. He emphasised right conduct because the *Charvakas* concluded, as a logical inference from their atheism, that free rein may be given to human passions. We have but to consider the facilities of easy production of wealth in the Indo-Gangetic plain, and the physiological effects of heat to realise how

Limits to Freedom

dangerous to the moral well-being of society would have been the wide acceptance of atheism in Ancient India.

Buddhism successfully turned the tide, but in doing so it left man without a God to worship. As Voltaire said: 'In the absence of a God, men would invent one.' So the Buddhists set up Buddha himself as a God, to make good the deficiency in their religion. Numerous stories originated about his life in successive births, all tending to elevate him to the rank of a God. Superstitions gathered round what was in the beginning one of the purest and best of religions, and degeneration set in. The doctrine of *Ahimsa* was carried to absurd lengths to the detriment of the virility and courage of the people.

Buddhism

In the decay of Buddhism, Brahminism saw its opportunity, and Sankaracharya developed the theories and preached doctrines that practically swept the followers of Buddha into the Hindu fold. The monism of Sankara, and the *Nirvana* of Buddha were practically different names of the same thing. He explained the varied manifestations of the Absolute as the result of *maya* or delusion, and that the underlying unity is perceived by those who are able to penetrate the veil. This sense of unity underlying all objective phenomena naturally diminished the importance of the differentiations of castes. The way was thus paved for looking upon life and what it brings as of little moment, and the difference in the

Sankara and Nirvana

conditions men are born into came to assume a far lesser importance than in Buddhism. That an underlying unity pervades the hierarchy of caste was a proposition more welcome than the one which, without stressing a fundamental unity, laid emphasis on a common brotherhood seldom realised in actual life. In Buddhism the individual souls have little in common except that they may converge to *Nirvana*. There was no supreme soul on which Sankara laid so much emphasis in opposition to Buddhistic agnosticism. It will have been seen that to the Indian mind, with institutions such as it had, a supreme soul, to love and be loved by, was a vital necessity.

Sankara's Absolute, in which all merged finally in eternal union, was however destructive of individuality. If the individual's ultimate fate is fusion with the Infinite, there is little point in those efforts which tend to preserve and emphasise his individuality. For love, however pure, unsullied and unselfish, to be of the highest value, one has to preserve one's identity distinct and inviolate. It is distinct identity that makes love a devotion, a sacrifice and an effacement. Once that identity is threatened, the sacrifice, the effacement and the devotion cease to have appreciable value. Apart from those difficulties, which man with his limited powers and capacities could not but feel, every one of the Hindu institutions, the Joint family, caste, etc., was reared and brought to perfection on a basis of love and humanity, and a theory like Sankara's, whatever its appeal to

Weakening of the Individual

the intellect, was bound in the long run to fail in securing universal acceptance.

Sankara could not, however, go a step further. If he had, he would not have been able to cut the ground from under the feet of Buddhism. The step from *Nirvana* to anything beyond Sankara's Absolute would have been too long. The further stages in the evolution of Hindu thought had to be left to his successors, and these steps were taken before long. Once Buddhism lost its hold on the people and Hinduism revived, the Indian instinct of a personal god to love and adore asserted itself.

Overcome by other Reformers

Ramanuja carried Hinduism to a qualified dualism which gave to the individual the status of a separate entity, sufficient to make religion a matter more of the heart than of the head. Both Ramanuja and Chaitanya made Hinduism a religion of love. Even this, however, was not found sufficient by Madhvacharya who, not long after those reforms, enunciated the theory of unqualified dualism in which the individual soul is regarded as distinct from the universal soul, and the final fusion with the universal soul is not contemplated. Madhvacharya has a very large following in the Dakhan and in South India.

These are the main lines of Indian Religious thought. Of minor developments there are a great number, those initiated by Tukaram, Tulsi Das, Kabir, Nanak and the Alwars. Of more modern Reformers, Ram Mohan Roy, Dayanand Saraswati, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and Swami

Recent Reformers

Vivekananda are worthy of mention, representing the reactions of Western thought on Hinduism. The highly eclectic religion of Ram Mohan Roy represents the facile solution of religious and social problems, as it appeared to a mind fascinated by the freedom and vitality of the West. Ramakrishna's religion summons back to love and devotion the humanity of India, distracted with the conflict of East and West and the disturbed equilibriums of a society all but cast adrift from its ancient moorings. Simple and clear as were his teachings, they failed to appeal to the English educated. They had gone in their mad worship of the West so far as to be ignorant of everything on which to sustain individual or national self-respect. They were the thinking part of the community, and yet that part which were rapidly beginning to cease to love and respect their own motherland. Nothing is so destructive, so debasing and so demoralising an agency as a sense of moral or spiritual bankruptcy. Ramakrishna's religion was all right to those in whom the religious instinct still persisted. To them who cared no more for religion, Ramakrishna had no appeal. The reclamation of the educated was beyond him, and was left to his famous disciple, Swami Vivekananda. We are astonished at the militant and aggressive character of his preachings. We marvel at the courage that made him beard the lion in his own den. We marvel at the strength of the voice that sounded as a trumpet call to Indians to rouse them to a sense of the greatness of their religion

in the past and the decadence of the present, and we are surprised that a disciple of a Reformer, so lovable and so quiet, should have had the fire and passion of a military leader. So alone, however, could the educated be won back to the worship of their motherland. Swami Vivekananda represents the rebound from the depression in which every shred of national self-respect had been torn off. The proof, which he furnished in abundance, that Hinduism will stand better than other religions any examination whether scientific or philosophical, was the proof which alone would convince the Westernised Indian, and give him a firm foothold at a time when the flood of Western civilisation threatened to sweep him away. More than religion, the Western educated Hindu lacked self-respect. That, for all its political domination, for all its superiority, the West could not in the field of religion approach the Hindu, gave ample scope for national self-respect to reassert itself. Once rehabilitated thus, it was bound to strengthen and broaden out into other fields and meet all the requirements of a national revival. Swami Vivekananda was the first Indian nationalist.

Vivekananda and Nationalism

Since Swami Vivekananda, the religious revival worth mentioning has been the one initiated by Gandhi under cover of his political propaganda. Gandhi requires a chapter to himself, and it is best that the consideration of his religious reform is deferred to that chapter. Sufficient has been written, however, to show

that, decadent and encumbered with parasitic growth as Hinduism may appear to be, there is still sufficient vitality left in it to energise the people on occasions of national crises. The fundamentals of Hindu religion rest on principles of universal application, and they stand in no danger of being affected by the advance in science or philosophy. Their universal character makes Hinduism the mother of Religions. As has been well said, convulsions of thought may throw up a new religion on the vast sea of Hinduism, a religion, however, which must own the maternity of Hinduism and may never set itself in antagonism to it. It is sufficiently potent to exert its influence on the other religions in India, on Muhammadanism and Christianity. Buddhism that once threatened Hinduism had to quit the country. On the vast body of crude faiths and superstitions that go under the name of Hinduism, the universal principles embodied in it exert a refining influence. They limit their growth and fix their place in Hinduism. In its sweep onwards, many a belief and superstition are dislodged and thrown into its bed; but, as the mighty waters flow, these crude and mis-shapen things move on slowly and with many a halt, but move onward, their shapes rendered less ugly and their angularities softened, until they reach the bosom of the Infinite sea. The contrast that is here presented to other religions is striking and instructive. Whether in Buddhism, Muhammadanism or Christianity, the tendency of new doctrines and

Centripetal Character

creeds that appear is centrifugal rather than centripetal. The mutual repulsion of rival sects is not softened by the gravitation to a body of common truths underlying the religion, for these latter represent not Truth itself, but aspects of Truth. We are liable to wrangle over the precise shade of yellow or green, violet or indigo, orange or red or blue ; of the white light itself, the pure unsullied radiance as it comes direct from the Sun itself, there can be no disagreement.

While that is true, the more comprehensive outlooks, the universalism, and the grounding in essentials fail to give to action the same enthusiasms and the same degree of driving force, that the more limited outlooks of other religions can impart to it. Through narrow gorges the current gathers force, but slows down where the river has broadened out. One has but to take a perspective of a thousand years to look upon this World as quite all right and requiring no human effort to improve it. The idea of a succession of lives tends to preclude any tendency to intensity of life in the present. A battle-field, where opposing armies are arrayed and the conflict is imminent, is the last place where the West would doubt the wisdom of shedding blood for the sake of an empire, and of carrying on a highly philosophical discussion to remove the doubt. The Gita might have been introduced at the critical moment to heighten the effect on readers, but it is significant that the Lord Krishna has to seek all the resources

A Striking Contrast

of a subtle philosophy to rouse the hero of heroes to heroic action. The contrast is instructive; the Hindu God advising his devotee to fight, and Christ asking his followers to show the right cheek where the left is smitten. If advice is intended to rouse and develop virtues which are absent, the almost contradictory commandments of the two disclose a divergence in the characters of the European and the Indian.

If these are defects of Hinduism, they are defects of the qualities. If the defects are to be removed, the qualities would go with them.

The Future

If we are to have the enthusiasm, the energies and the exaggerated materialism of the West, we must be prepared for the spiritual bankruptcy, the narrowness of outlooks and sympathies that go with them in the West. Like the West, we shall have to let go our grip on the universal to retain a hold on the particular, or to sacrifice the permanent for the sake of the temporary. We may fashion religion to our taste to find that we have destroyed the taste for Religion. The way of the West is not the way for India. We may not empty the reservoir of spirituality on which we have drawn for forty centuries. To go forward in religion we have to go backward to the fundamentals of Hinduism. With the help of those fundamentals we have to refine the crude faiths and worships, the terms and formularies of the lower strata of Hindu society, and bring them up to the level of what the higher castes

believe, and to make them accept the same disciplines of body and mind. We should introduce into it these practices and observances that will draw the various castes into a common brotherhood, and encourage common action and collective effort in matters affecting society as a whole.

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10. THE VILLAGE COMMUNITY

An Initial Misunderstanding—Growth and Decay of Village Communities—In Europe and in India—Absence of Military Character—Election Contrasts—Supremacy of Royal Authority—Our Real Problem—Promotion of Character—Danger of a Dull Monotony—Prevented by a Civil Aristocracy—Explanation for Absence of Political Struggle.

THE village community in India has extorted the admiration of many a Western observer of the old type. The village organisation of the *Panchayat* and the arrangements for rural education and sanitation, for the protection of life and property, and for the administration of justice are features of rural life which had disappeared in English life long ago, long before the establishment of Feudalism in England. When the English saw it for the first time in India, they were very favourably impressed, and one of them dignified Indian villages by the name of Republics. Following them, Indian students of political science, hard pressed under the fire of Western criticism to find democratic institutions in India, turned to the village, so beautifully christened by Western observers themselves, as the one institution which would help them to refute the argument of democratic incompetence. There

An Initial Misunderstanding

has been, therefore, considerable exaggeration. India is not alone in the feature of village government, but has to share the glory with ancient France and Modern Russia, in fact with all countries where the bulk of the people were or are rural and have not been overpowered by the centralisation of a monarchic state.

Growth and Decay of Village Communities

The growth of village communities in all these countries is easily traced to the necessity for forming compact groups in isolated tracts, which are therefore exposed to attack by wild beasts or hostile tribes, and to the habit of close association persisting even after a nomadic tribe settled down to agricultural pursuits. Want of easy communication between village and village, and village and town and the consequent difficulty of exchange of produce, the indifference and neglect of the central authority distracted with war, would throw these groups on their own resources and induce them to develop the rudiments of an administration of their own. Where the king adopts a policy of centralisation from the necessities of safeguarding his kingdom from encroachment, from external as well as internal troubles, or when forces developed in the body politic to sweep village economics into the larger current of the economics of the country as a whole, village administration loses its integrity and decays. The vision of the tiller of the soil enlarges beyond the narrow confines of his village, and he perceives, for the first time, the stirrings of a national consciousness which is the foundation of a national

Government. It was so in France. It was so in Russia until a few years ago.

The appearance of Feudalism and the constant warfare between feudal lords in Europe resulting in insecurity of property and danger to life, drew independent cultivators to them in varying degrees of dependence as the only safety. It was the policy of feudal lords to dissolve communal ties, in whatever form they existed, and destroy every form of combination that might tempt the tillers to resist their exactions by way of military service or other forms of tribute. The village communities therefore disappeared and were forgotten until, centuries later, historians gathered evidence of their past existence. In India the village organisation has survived to this day, because above and beyond the universal laws of their formation already described, there were others in operation. Apart from the large percentage of population that was always rural, there never was in India a strong central Government before the advent of the British. The duty laid on the king by Manu of appointing the village Headman, and of personal supervision of all village affairs, was neglected under the fatal necessity, to which Indian kings were subject, of extending their kingdoms in order to consolidate them. According to the Arthasastra, in any inter-village dispute regarding boundaries, the interference of the king was sought only after attempts at arriving at a decision between the elders of the neighbourhood had failed.

In Europe and in India

And even then, it was not sought for a final judgment, but for the appropriation of the land by the king himself. Under the Muhammadan dynasties the neglect of the village was greater, for they had no interest in them beyond the collection of the taxes.

The village assembly in India was exclusively for purposes of civil administration. In this respect, it offers a striking contrast to the analogous Teutonic institutions in which the military duty, imposed on the younger members, gave them a position of importance, and a political influence for the assembly, which the king in need of military services could not afford to neglect or despise. What there was of fighting in the Indian village was in defence against plundering bands, which the absence of a settled or efficient Government let loose on the country. There was no military service expected of, or offered by, the villagers as such on behalf of the country or the king. The arrangement of the affairs of the village reached a high degree of efficiency. The Uttaramallur inscriptions reveal the existence of an organised administration of the villages in the Chola period. The various branches of the administration were entrusted to committees, responsible to the general assembly, elected by ballot from among the people themselves. This must have assured to the villagers a measure of democratic life.

Absence of Military Character

The constitution of the village *panchayat*, based as it was on election by ballot, has so

little in it of the more important features of Western representative institutions that political terms derived from the West are apt to mislead. In the first place, the election of a few from amongst a number of equals to discharge familiar and well-known duties is something very different from the election of individuals of social and intellectual eminence to privileges and responsibilities, on the proper discharge of which depend important issues, not of parochial, but national welfare. In such elections, there are none of the social and political forces which come into play when candidates of high status or attainment have to seek the suffrages of a large class of social inferiors. Secondly, the village assemblies enforced obligations rather than rights. Where the supreme object was the continued maintenance of harmonious relations and mutual good-will among the villagers, the principle cannot be of majority or minority, but one of compromise. In the discussion of any question, in which every one was at liberty to take part, all possible alternatives were discussed, and that which met with the approval of all came to be the final decision. Sir Herbert Risley long ago drew attention to this important difference. In his report on the Archæological survey of India for 1904, he says:

Election Contrasts

The method by which the *Panchayat* is elected cannot be expressed in terms of European political phraseology. The people sit together, they talk and evidently an opinion emerges from their talk which is the opinion of all of them. There is no majority, for they are unanimous.

There is no minority, for the minority has been talked over and casts in with the lot of the majority. The process can be described as election by acclamation in the way the ancient Greek and Roman bodies were elected, the oldest modes of election in the world.

To talk of this institution as a Republic is to perpetuate a fiction. Its governing principle was the spirit of compromise and of mutual understanding. It was not so much a matter of intellect and will as of feeling and understanding, a case not so much of opposing interests as personal inclinations. There could have been no serious divergences of opinion in the vital interests in a village. The problems affecting the village as a whole were problems which did not require different solutions for different wards of the village. Differences arising were then differences of opinion, more or less personal, and did not proceed from any wide cleavage in interests. The interests of the village were in close interdependence. From the same grain heap on the threshing floor the landlord, the various artisans and the menials drew their respective shares fixed by custom. A rich harvest swelled the share of every one, and a poor one diminished it. Prosperity or adversity, the village shares it as a whole. Payment in kind reduced the fluctuations of rent and wages fixed in money. No deep disturbance therefore could arise, within the village itself, to the tranquillities of life so assured.

It is in its relations with the king that the serious limitations of these so-called Republics appear. The village assembly had no voice in the taxation imposed by the king. It could

make representations, it could protest, even desert the village as a protest, abandoning its lands: it had no right to be consulted in advance. It is true the share of the king in the produce was fixed by custom, and as a rule, he did not exceed the limit so fixed. The point, however, is whether the taxes were imposed by the will of the people or by the king, and there can be no hesitation in saying that the king alone had the authority. That at once puts the village republics on a level lower than those of Greece or Rome. The authority of the king extended much further. Even in the village affairs, the authority exercised by the king was arbitrary and not regulated by the collective will of the village. There are records of fines imposed by the king on the village assemblies, of appeals made to the king to protect the assembly from the officers deputed by the king, and to settle disputes, all of which go to show that the authority of the king was supreme and was limited only by his sense of *Dharma* or duty.

Supremacy of Royal Authority

We have seen how the claim that village communities are democratic, in the sense that Greece or Rome was, cannot be sustained. That is not, however, to condemn the institution or to assent to a policy of disintegrating and dissolving it away out of existence. The question is not whether they were democratic or not, but whether, in the conditions of rural life in India, they should be preserved and improved. To settle this question one has to examine the institution from

Our Real Problem

altogether a different standpoint. The essence of village organisation was that it was a corporate body, which acted in all village matters as one body. The king did not deal with individuals directly but the village as a whole, which united the villagers to present a common front against any measures of the king to which they were opposed, and the king would generally yield where the opposition was strong or proceeded not from one but several villagers. No individual had occasion to come face to face with the administration, and therefore, he was saved from those humiliating experiences damaging to self-respect, which follow contact with officers unscrupulous or overbearing in the exercise of their powers. The consciousness that, in the affairs of the village, the villager had a voice as much as any other, tended to develop his personality and self-respect and strengthen his character.

It is true that the horizon of the village was narrow. But, for the exercise of moral qualities, such as described above, what is required is the opportunity. The extent of the field for its display has little to do with it. Village affairs are simple and no complexities of interests are involved. Village affairs are therefore inadequate for calling forth intellectual powers of a very high order. The village Hampden that withstood the tyrant of his little field will bring in the trial of strength with the royal tyrant the same strength of character and the same

Promotion of Character

determination, but the intellectual equipments, which sufficed in the local quarrel, may be hopelessly inadequate in the wider field of national affairs. The point therefore to be stressed in the village Government of India, the more so because of what has happened since the advent of the British, is that there were no processes in the administration and no interferences to demoralise or debase villagers. Its scheme of civil life allowed full play for co-operative effort, for combination in the performance of village advancement and of every form of corporate existence.

The description of village communities does not complete the picture of rural life in India. There are other elements which had an important bearing on rural life. The number of cultivators equal or nearly equal in status and wealth, and having more or less the same interest, may make for corporate life, brotherhood and co-operation, and every useful and effective combination to life in that village, being more or less uniform, tends to be at the same time a dull level. It is not sufficiently varied to be a stimulus to rivalry and emulation. It requires light and shade; the stimulus to a higher standard of life comes from higher standards seen, as lived and enjoyed in the neighbourhood. Nor will there be a disposition to cultivate and improve the mind unless its refining effects on temperament and culture are seen and appreciated. The varieties of social and individual contacts so stimulating to the mind, which may be had in towns, are

Danger of a Dull Monotony

absent in villages. Nor are there higher standards of social behaviour to be seen. There is thus little inducement or opportunity for village folks for cultural and social improvement, and they tend to settle down to a dull level of monotonous life, which alone the peaceful cultivation of the soil in a close neighbourhood demands.

Prevented by a Civil Aristocracy

This inevitable effect was to a large extent prevented in India. In Europe the luxurious life of the Feudal lord, his castle and his surroundings held out before the people in the neighbourhood a standard of life and of luxury and of behaviour too far above the life of the humbler folk, it is true, but it stimulated ambition and therefore exerted, on the whole, a beneficial influence. In India there were Aristocracies too, but not militaristic; nor were they vested with powers such as the Feudal lords exercised, but were made up of men who distinguished themselves in services to the king as his ministers, or his military commanders. These men were not rewarded with dominions as the feudal lords were, of which they were absolute owners and which they had cultivated by means of bailiffs, serfs and villeins, but with assignments of revenue which they were allowed to collect. This aristocracy was necessarily wealthy with influence at court and accustomed to the high standard of life and culture there. Their property descended not according to the ordinary Hindu Law, but by primogeniture which helped to

consolidate and improve estates. The presence of these men made for considerable amenities, and therefore for the attractions of rural life. They presided over sports, at bullock and buffalo races, owned and lent the best bull for service, provided schools where sons of dependants were allowed to study along with their own, invited circuses and dramatic troupes to give performances to which admittance was free, built temples and choultries, initiated and encouraged local charities, lent money at easy rates of interest, relieved distress in times of scarcity, gave lavish feasts on occasions of ceremonies and arbitrated in disputes, helped the neighbourhood with advice and judgment, and generally lived a higher standard of life.

These are valuable services to the neighbourhood, and they were rendered possible, because there was no antagonism of interest between them and the ryots. The competition between tenants for land, which places them at a serious disadvantage in their relations with the landlord in these days, had not yet arisen. Competition, if there was at all, was between landlords for tenants. What the new aristocracy was entitled to was but a share in the revenue. There was no chance of increasing it; nor was there authority to do so. An aristocracy, so divested of undesirable features, was of the greatest value to the village communities to set higher standards of behaviour and refinement, and present contrasts and inequalities which gave stimulus to emulation

Explanation for Absence of Political Struggles

and endeavour. On the other hand, there were features in the constitution of this aristocracy, the absence of any possibility of oppression on their part of ryots and tenants, its more or less civil character, and its comparative distance from the throne, which gave no occasion for developing those resistances of the people to their tyranny which lead, stage by stage, to a sense of their political power. Political strength is nursed by local oppression and has to develop there sufficiently, before it can be tried with any hope of success against royal oppression. In India the method of rural oppression was practically confined to taxation and could not, under communal organisation, embrace the life of the people as a whole, excepting so far as this could be affected by oppressive taxes. One has to contrast it with the possibilities of oppression by the feudal lords of Europe to realise fully how far Indian life was secure from causes of political discontent. In the administration of justice, in the demand for military service, in the provision of housing accommodation, in the assent to be given to a proposed marriage alliance among tenants and in a hundred other details of life extending even to the grinding of corn, the feudal lord could so exercise his authority as to advance his own interest at the expense of those of his dependants. Human nature could not tolerate for long the opposition of authority so close, so stifling, so coterminous with life itself, unless it renounced its title to that name. Hence arose the

movements towards union of classes that were oppressed, the sense of common suffering, the struggle for freedom, the passion for liberty which ultimately resulted in Self-Government in varying degrees of perfection in the West. There was no occasion for similar movements in India in the past, but there have been, as will be seen hereafter, since the advent of the British.

II. INDIAN POLITICAL EVOLUTION

Misapplication and Misreading—Correct Enquiry Obscured—Magnitude and Unity of the Country —Aryan Nationalism—No Consolidation without Empire—Aswamedha, Digvijaya etc.— Less Accessible Regions—An Empire Inevitable —Clearly seen in British Expansion—Disorders of the 18th Century—Comparisons, Indian Political Unity not Easy—Charge of Oppressive Taxation—Indian Rulers more Charitable than Tyrannical—Checks to Political Oppression— Basic Differences in Political Evolution in East and West—Ancient Indian Democracies and Military Responsibilities—Dharma, Sense of Duty and Sense of Right—Disappearance of a Military Caste and Dependence on Mercenaries —Consequent Weakness.

ABOUT no aspect of India is there greater misconception than her political evolution. Western political theories, built for the most part on Western experience, are not adequate to embrace the lines of political evolution elsewhere in the World. Misconceptions have arisen from the application of political terms, whose content and associations have originated from experiences purely Western. Apart from misconceptions of Indian history arising from this cause, there has been

Misappli-cation and Misreading

a political motive, under the influence of which facts have been distorted or ignored. On a superficial examination, the fact goes very much against India that, while in the course of 2,000 years Western nations have advanced from barbarism to nationalism and Self-Government, nowhere in her vast territories has India succeeded, during a period twice as long, in developing national institutions of a similar character. That one fact suffices for the hasty judgments of racial arrogance and the propaganda of exploiting imperialism. Influenced thus, it is natural not to go deeper to explore those profounder causes in operation, which fixed political institutions practically at the stage in which they are found described in ancient books, and left undefined, with mutual encroachments and in a state of flux, the wide limits between kingly authority and communal institutions. How comes it that in spite of oppressive taxes, in spite of wars costly in blood and money, no revolution followed beyond change of a king or dynasty? At no time during the long period of its prosperity, extending over several centuries and continued in parts of the country uninterrupted long after the appearance of Muhammadans across the frontier, during which India traded with distant parts of the World, perfected her arts, science and philosophy and planted her colonies, does it seem to have occurred to the people to build sovereignty on sounder foundations than the caprice and personality of mortal kings.

'Test' Questions

Indian students of political history have failed to explore in the right direction. In their desire to refute the charge that the democratic instinct is foreign to Indian mentality, most of them have been led astray and made it almost their one preoccupation, the discovery of democratic institutions in India. It must be confessed they have not attained any considerable measure of success. They have, as we have seen, attempted to press into service the existence of institutions which are not democratic in the sense in which the word is understood in the West. Here again we have another instance of the natural necessity of enquiries into Indian conditions, in the past as well as the present, proceeding in the wrong direction under the impulse to defend the motherland against undeserved foreign accusations. It would almost seem accepted, what is indeed not true, that the passion for Self-Government is an instinct deep down, as though the structure of Governments had little to do with the conditions as they exist and vary from time to time. The republican form of Government of Greece or Rome did not prevent the introduction later of autocratic forms of Government. The fact is that forms of Government have less to do with inborn instincts, but more with external conditions. Forms change as requirements of progress change. The fact, that in early India there were republics, may serve to demolish the arguments of the interested foreigner. It is no argument for that form of Government in the present day, unless conditions demand it.

Correct Enquiry Obscured

Attempts at defence like these, patriotic and creditable as they are, leave obscure and unascertained the more important facts required for a correct understanding of Indian political evolution. Among these, the geographical unity, referred to in an earlier chapter, is of fundamental importance. The country is much too large for ethnical unity, and too little divided for racial characteristics to be intensified into nationalism. The enormous area of the country and its more or less uniform fertility made easy the migration of people from one part of the country to another for the intermingling of races and for the growth of a common culture and social order. But its wide expanse prevented shocks of invasion and calamities at one corner being felt at another, and therefore prevented those common reactions which have been the beginnings of national consciousness all over the World.

Magnitude and Unity of the Country

The fundamental unity of India was in ancient days little more than a geographical fact. It is true that there are certain puranic prayers, which endeavour to keep the consciousness of India as a whole, among those who are enjoined to repeat them. But these classes were the Aryans. It was natural that, scattered over the entire continent in small groups amidst a preponderating Sudra population, they should try and preserve the sense of their common interest, and of distinct identity and unity for the sake of their culture

Aryan Nationalism

and ideals. The warning against Brahmins settling in Sudra kingdoms shows that such a danger was clearly perceived. But Aryan nationalism is very far from Indian nationalism which demands a sense of unity not in a superior class alone, but the people as a whole. To argue from these prayers, forbidden from the lips of the majority of the people, a consciousness of Indian unity is to strain the inference too far, and indeed, these prayers give a contrary indication, for the very fact, that recourse was had to these unusual means, shows how difficult it was to keep a sub-continent as a background for individual or communal action.

No Consolidation without Empire

The absence of effective frontiers, except along the borders in the north and north-west, operated even more disastrously on the political history of the country. It imposed on the Indian king, who desired to secure his throne to himself and to his descendants, the almost impossible condition of extending his dominion over the entire country, for there could not be any security so long as the absence of effective barriers tempted the numerous adjoining kingdoms and principalities to prey one on another, and there was the chance of a rival becoming a formidable power. The most important political fact, that to consolidate a kingdom in India it had to be expanded into an empire, was perceived by successive rulers from very early times, by Chandra Gupta, Asoka, Samudra Gupta, by Harsha, by the Marathas and the Mughals and

last by England, and England succeeded better than any of her predecessors.

Aswamedha, Digvijaya, etc.

The picturesque phrase of Chandra Gupta "to rule under one umbrella', and the practice of *Aswamedha Yaga* in which a horse was let loose, and the countries through which it wandered had to acknowledge suzerainty on pain of war—both these revealed a thorough grasp of the singular political necessity to which India was subject. The rapid growth, disintegration and decay of empires and kingdoms, their insatiable greed and scramble for territory—what indeed the casual reader of Indian History, more especially from the West, would put down to the fatal incapacity of Indian kings—are then the result of the struggle for existence, enforced on them by the geographical unity of the Indian continent, which made for the establishment of many kingdoms, but necessitated one empire.

Less Accessible Regions

That struggle was less in the rugged and inaccessible parts of the country, where defence was easier, and it is interesting to note that the protected states of India are distributed over these tracts: Kashmir, Nepal, Rajaputana, Central Indian States, Hyderabad and Mysore are all situated in the less accessible portions of the country on the high Himalayan margin, in the desert, or in the rugged Dakcan plateau. In the low alluvial plains of Agra, Oudh and Bengal, the struggle was keenest, and the whole of the area is under foreign rule.

The whole tendency of political evolution in India was thus towards the establishment of a dominant power over the whole of India which might give its shelter and protection to as many kingdoms as possible that would acknowledge its suzerainty, but could not tolerate a rival of equal or approximately equal power within its limits. Against this natural trend of geographical conditions the people would offer no obstruction, for a petty king or chieftain, always expecting to be attacked by a powerful neighbour, could not give to them the same security as a powerful one. It was natural and laudable that an empire over the whole of India should have been the ambition of every powerful king or dynasty that has ruled in India, and that the subjects should be reconciled to such a policy.

An Empire Inevitable

The inevitable tendency to overlordship over the country, once a strong and not easily assailable position was attained in the country, is clearly revealed in the early history of British rule in India. With the final extinction of the French Power and the accession to the enormous wealth of Bengal, the English embarked on a career of conquest and consolidation to which there was little check or opposition. Before long, they found it necessary for the maintenance of their position that they should prevent or reduce the many opportunities, that there were in the political confusion of the country, for the formidable accumulation of power in a rival hand. It was

Clearly seen in British Expansion

therefore the deliberate policy of Wellesley to isolate the larger powers by barriers of protected states, which were attracted to the new power for the shelter and protection it gave. This policy, as the Court of Directors found, multiplied opportunities for interference and annexation which were too costly in men and money. A reaction followed under which it became the policy to let powerful states arise by the absorption of smaller ones. In the treaty with Scindia, the Government of India engaged to enter into no treaty with the Ranas of Udaipur, Jodhpur, Kotah and other chiefs of India situated in Malwa, Mewar and Marwar, and "in no sense to interfere in the settlement which the Scindia may make with these chiefs". A similar treaty of about the same time with Holkar provided that the Government would have no concern with any of the rulers situated to the south of Chambal. The treaty with the Peshwa contained a similar clause. This policy of non-interference and limited liability, as Sir Alfred Lyall writes,

> invariably failed to do more than check or postpone for an interval the really inevitable tendency of an organised power to over-ride, if not absorb, loose tribal rulerships and ephemeral despotisms which spring up and survive merely because more durable institutions are wanting, and until they are supplied, not only indeed is the check temporary but the reaction is apt to produce a rebound. A few steps are followed by a great stride forward. The onward movement may be temporarily arrested by such physical barriers as mountains or deserts, but it comes to a standstill only when the way is at last blocked by a rival power of equal calibre, or when the central forces begin to decline. The truth is that in the art of political engineering solid construction depends on the material available, and on the proper adoption of resistance to natural pressure. It is as impossible to lay

down a frontier on an untenable line as to throw a dam across a river of bad foundations. The dam is carried away at the next flood, nor will the strictest prudence long maintain a frontier on a system that does not run along the rational lines of political and territorial permanency.

It was thus that the British were driven forward, in spite of themselves and in ignorance of final consequences, to the mastery and control of a whole continent. We may now view in the proper light the spectacle of political confusion and disorder which the East India Company witnessed on their arrival in India, and to which British writers and speakers never cease to refer. Chieftaincies, subordinate sovereignties and viceroyalties were breaking loose one after another at the time from the tottering Moghul empire, and there ensued a general scramble all over the country for power and territory. That is true enough, but that was because Mughal power had declined and failed in its objective of an enduring empire. A catastrophe of that magnitude will arise at any time that the central power fails, and will continue till another steps in its place, and it will not be until there is a prolonged trial of strength between forces that are let loose. The earlier visitors from England to India during the reigns of Jahangir and Shah Jahan did not see any disorder, nor did their successors during the earlier years of Aurangazib. The confusion that followed his reign was the result of the dismemberment of an Empire.

Disorders of the 18th Century

The accusation, that even so late as the 18th century the political unification of India

had not been achieved, can be cast back, in the face of those who make it, with greater effect. There is no instance of political union in recorded history being established over an area so wide as that of India. Territories no bigger than a minor province of India had not effected a union before the 17th century, and they failed till then in spite of the existence of effective frontiers. England and Scotland, constituting one single island, isolated from the continent of Europe by the English Channel, united under one king only in 1707. Italy did not acknowledge one sovereign power before the middle of the 19th century. The political confusion of Germany about the time of Napoleon was of the worst description, and the German Empire was not established before Bismark welded the numerous principalities and dukedoms, jealous of one another, into one political whole. The political unity of Great Britain and Ireland, such as it is, is as recent as 1922. In the face of these facts, the failure of India to achieve in the 19th century a political unity over the whole country, equal in dimension to the whole of Europe excepting Russia, is not much to her discredit. She had every possible obstacle in point of vastness of territory, racial complexity and religious diversity, on a scale which no European country had to face. Let it be remembered too that the Hindus set social unity far above political unity. They did not believe in the use of political power towards racial unification. The principles to which Indian culture

Comparisons—Indian Political Unity not Easy

and civilisation were wedded to from the start were principles which were the very antithesis of those that were adopted in the West, which denied to the individual freedom of religious worship, and enforced a common ethical and moral code under very grave penalties.

There is one other charge against Indian kings which is sometimes made. There is evidence that as many as 122 taxes were once collected by the Indian kings, and on this fact has been built up a theory that the subjects of Indian kings groaned under innumerable and vexatious taxes. It is to be hoped that the very heavy taxes of the West following the Great War, especially the vexatious income-tax reaching as much as 2 shillings in the pound in England, would enlighten critics sufficiently to cease from accusation of Indian kings on their temptation to impose heavy taxation. The customary demands used to be as low as 1/12 of the gross income from land. It was increased subsequently and was added to, because of the incessant wars forced on them as a result of the continual struggle for existence which the geographical conditions entailed.

Charge of Oppressive Taxation

Indian kings have been far oftener benevolent than cruel, and inclined to protect rather than neglect or repress their subjects. They have constructed roads, caravansaries and temples, and dug irrigation channels and have always contributed liberally to the maintenance of charities and to the improvements of arts and literature. The best exponents of Indian art and craftsmanship

were welcome to their courts as well as poets and scholars, no matter to which race or religion they belonged. The spectacle, which Hiouen-Tsang witnessed, of the distribution among the people of the enormous surplus in the treasury, is by no means a solitary example and there have been many Hindu and Muhammadan kings of the kindliness and good nature of Asoka. The truth is that the people trusted to the influences of religion on the king and on his own sense of duty to govern them well, and the reliance has seldom been found misplaced in the course of Indian History. The fact should never be lost sight of that amidst a people divided into castes, each with specific duties to perform, emphasis was bound to be laid on the king's duties rather than on his rights.

Indian Rulers, more Charitable than Tyrannical

This exaltation of the sense of duty over that of right prevented those encroachments on the liberties of the subject, which were among the causes that made for the movement towards Self-Government in the West; nor was there any considerable field for encroachment in the communal organisation of Hindu society on a basis of villages and castes. A very large proportion of disputes relating to property and petty criminal cases were dealt with by the *Panchayats*. The main tax was derived from the share in the gross produce from land; any increase not agreeable to the people was resisted not by individuals, but by each village or villages collectively. The safeguard

Checks to Political Oppression

against oppression lay in castes or communities deserting the kingdom and settling elsewhere, which disorganised social life resting on communal inter-dependence, and on their liability to throw up villages which would diminish the revenues of the country. Both these were powerful weapons against royal oppression, and we have already seen how the abundance of land, the low capital required for starting cultivation and the abundance of return operate against a steady or plentiful supply of labour. It prevented oppressions such as those of Europe, under which enormous properties were worked by serfs and villeins little distinguished from slaves, and therefore prevented entanglements in the close meshes of feudal authority which extended to the minutia of local life and customs. Individuals who had done signal service to the king were not rewarded as in Europe with dominions, but with assignments of revenue of villages or taluks, in which their rights consisted merely in the appropriation of taxes due from them normally to Government. It need scarcely be said that the transfer of taxes to local chieftains or nobles from the local treasury would make no difference to the people who pay them.

The truth is the whole line of thought, pursued in connection with enquiries regarding political evolution in the West, has to be practically abandoned when a similar investigation is made with reference to India. For the development is wholly on divergent lines. On the one hand, it starts with a military aristocracy in political power with a large population of

slaves having no rights whatever and compulsorily engaged in the production of wealth to the exclusive benefit of their masters, and it proceeds along the line of gradual admission, as political exigencies or economic necessity required, of the slaves to the liberties and power enjoyed by the aristocracy, until politically all were on a footing of equality. The advance of slaves, or those nearly equal to them, to a share in political power has meant the abrogation of status and of a homogeneity of thought and feeling in regard to the concerns and interests of the State. In India, on the other hand, political power was not necessarily associated with social predominance or religious pre-eminence, and was therefore never the object of ambition of the communities that gained admission into the Hindu fold. Each was guaranteed in all its essentials, its social, religious and economic life, and therefore was content to let political power remain in the hands of the caste or castes who claimed the exercise of it as their function,

Basic Difference in Political Evolution in East and West

In the earlier stages of Indian social evolution when caste had not hardened and aboriginal races had not been admitted into Aryan polity, military duties had been shared by a majority in the community. The members, most of them having been independent cultivators, equal in point of wealth and status, united by ties of language and sentiment and drawn together in defence against surrounding tribes, there was among them a spirit

of democracy at a higher level than we find in Greece or Rome, because it was not nourished and sustained by slavery. The democratic constitutions of the ancient kingdoms and republics of India relate to this period. The policy of admission of Non-Aryan communities profoundly altered the situation. Political power could not possibly be made to follow the ever expanding boundary lines of Aryan civilisation without risk to Aryan culture. Political equality is incompatible with racial heterogeneity. The restriction of military duty to the predominant caste was inevitable. The majority of the Non-Aryan communities that accepted Aryan civilisation never sought, nor were they given, political power, and therefore had no occasion to develop any sense of political responsibility. Such tribes as would not exchange political integrity for the security of tribal life and customs were admitted into the Kshatriya class, but these were very few. The vast majority were content to live their own life, subject to the very broad and elastic requirement of Hindu culture. The ancient democracies of India changed under the stress of the peculiar conditions into monarchies, and all that was left to the people at large was their caste and village autonomy.

Ancient Indian Democracies

And Military Responsibilities

The main duty of the king in such a scheme was the maintenance of *Dharma* or, in other words, of helping people to live their lives according to the law of their being, and as enjoined by the *Shastras*. The rights of every

community were regulated and no trespass was allowed beyond boundary lines so fixed. Any such trespass would meet with the universal opposition of the people as well as that of the king. Under this assurance of the enjoyment of fixed rights, well established by custom further reinforced by Sastraic sanction, the discharge of duties was bound to be satisfactorily performed, for the liability to forfeit one's rights by the king or nobles in the community would have made acquisition and consolidation of these the one preoccupation. Under the unrestricted individual competition of the West, each class is too much preoccupied with the acquisition and addition and consolidation of their rights to be mindful of the duties it owes to other classes. Such a principle of advance and progress would have made perhaps for more rapid progress, but at the same time would have rendered impossible the acceptance of *Dharma* as the regulating principle of society. That the emphasis on duties rather than on rights would prevent encroachment on the part of the king on the rights of the people is obvious. Absence of mutual encroachment prevented those movements towards Self-Government which followed the impossible demands which Western kings made on their people. That is a feature of Indian monarchy which is not so much against it as in its favour. The life, the people wanted to live, they were encouraged to live. In spheres, in which from intimacy of local knowledge accuracy of judgment

Dharma

Sense of Duty and Sense of Right

collectively by the people could be attained, there was no interference at all from the king. In the collection of the revenue from the villages, in adjusting it to the varied conditions of the village folk so as to avoid hardship to any, in the employment of local police, in the arbitrament of local disputes as regards land, etc., and in village administration as a whole, the central authority never interfered. On the other hand, in matters above the comprehension of the village where the rural vote cannot be informed, as in matters of defence or offence and political relations with neighbouring states, the king's authority was absolute. The ministers were of his choice, nor was popular will ascertained before the imposition of taxes above the customary level.

The main defect of monarchy, if it is one, is that under the acceptance of duty as a regulating principle, the function of protection from invasion developed as a duty on the Government, in the same way as other duties devolved on the rest of the society corresponding to their status and inherited profession. The duty of the people was to pay the taxes. The king's business was to organise the armies to ensure protection of life and property. The principle that the duty of making war, either for offence or defence, devolved on the entire manhood of the kingdom was foreign to so exclusive a division of functions. It saved Indian kingdoms from being militaristic; rather, the non-militaristic

Disappearance of a Military Caste

character of the organisation did not allow that principle to emerge, and therefore precluded those tendencies which are inevitable in militaristic organisations. The presence of a hereditary warrior class would have kept alive the military instincts among the people in the requisite degree. Their disappearance made the king dependant on hireling armies consisting of men who had little or no military tradition, who looked upon military service not as a duty, and among whom, therefore, at any moment a man may arise who, able to secure the defection of a sufficient number, may be tempted to rebellion. The differences between a nationalist army and an army of hirelings are too obvious to be detailed in this connection. It may be said, however, that, in the absence of the *Kshatriyas*, national armies could not have been organised on a satisfactory basis in a society organised on caste lines. The rank and file would have been, at any time, of the most varied composition. The only feature that could have introduced cohesion into it, sufficient for speedy and effective action, was the leadership by officers, uniform in composition in point of race, class or tradition, and sense of military duty. It will be recalled that the officers of the British army were drawn exclusively from the higher classes till the eighties of the last century. So were the *Samurai* entrusted with military leadership in Japan. A similar arrangement was far more necessary in India where caste had fixed habits and customs, and attuned the

And Dependence on Mercenaries

mind to the inherited profession so far that it became irresponsive to the appeals of a different occupation.

The failure of the Indian armies on the death of the commander to achieve victory which was almost within their grasp, sudden defections and desertions from battle-fields for reasons often the most unaccountable cannot be explained on any other ground than the unsatisfactory composition of the officers of armies. The defect in the Indian monarchy was its reliance on hireling armies. It rendered kingdoms insecure both within and from without, within because any military commander might rebel and usurp the throne or set up a principality of his own within the borders, insecure from without because any invader might easily cause defections in the army and so secure his victory. Had the king been more secure, and could he rely on the resources of a more loyal army, we might have perhaps had a progress in the machinery and form of Government in which the popular voice was not confined to local affairs, but was extended to the spheres which the king called his own. The incessant struggle forced on the Indian kings, and their failure to extend their authority over the entire continent prevented attention being bestowed on these serious defects and deprived Indian compartmental organisation of the one vital element without which its function could not be fulfilled properly.

Consequent Weakness

12. INDIAN INDIVIDUALISM

Western Individualism Economic—Indian Individualism—A Telling Instance—Question of Concerted Action—Waste in the West—Origin of Surrender to Majority—Supremacy of Self-Interest—Indian Educational Principles—Individualism in Religion—Indian Charity—Disinclination to Organisation—Refined Sense—A Jutkawalla—The Physician's Debt—Decay of Refinement—The Obverse—The Corrective.

INDIVIDUALISM is so conspicuous a feature of Western democracies and is so identified in men's thoughts with the features found associated with it in the West that one is apt to think that it is only of one type. The essence of individualism is, however, the principle that each is for himself, and that it may regulate the activities of the individual in different spheres of his life. And everywhere there is the claim of the State on the individual, which imposed well-defined but varying limits on the sphere of his activity. In the West, the State was the supreme consideration, and the individual had to subserve to its requirements. In the old days, when European states were insecure as during the Dark and Middle Ages, political necessities required a regulation of individual life extending from military services to religious and economic

activity. As states became secure more and more, its authority receded gradually, until it is now practically confined to obligations of military service. The religious and economic spheres have been released from its purview and authority, subject of course to interference when the security of the State is threatened. The net result of this gradual withdrawal has been that, subject to the observance of the laws of the State, the individual is left to himself; he is told what he may not do rather than what he should do, and individual initiative and enterprise is left unhampered to that extent. In the economic sphere, competition is free and unrestricted, and equality of opportunity is being gradually extended to all.

Western Individualism Economic

Individualism of the West is, therefore, primarily economic. It is precisely in this sphere that the cultivation of the self is apt to exceed proper bounds, as the high degree of freedom that the individual enjoys and the wide extent of the field enable him to put forth all his energies to secure his advancement. It makes him efficient in the highest degree, but at the same time his selfishness is sharpened, and his understanding is narrowed.

In India, there does not appear to have been at any time, except perhaps in a few ancient kingdoms and republics in the north, the extension of authority over the whole field of individual life to the same extent as in the West. Not even in regard to military service was there imposed on

the citizen any inviolable obligation. We are apt to imagine, therefore, that economic individualism should have been rampant in India in the earliest times. As a matter of fact, however, to no individual was the economic sphere nation-wide. The many obligations of caste and the Joint family, and the limitation of competition which went with them prevented the growth of individualism of the type of the West. The social and religious organisation helped rather to fashion conduct, for the individual was told, as has already been pointed out, what he should do rather than what he may not. The more positive injunction leaves very little for individual initiative, while at the same time the legal network of the fine mesh of the West was not necessary. Indian civilisation tended not to fashion the individual to the requirements of common necessities, but rather to let each individual blossom in his own perfections. The discipline and control of caste may appear at first sight to negative the proposition. But little reflection is necessary, however, to show that the individual could not suffer from its stern discipline. The influences of heredity, of the atmosphere prevailing in caste, of its underlying philosophy as well as of religion reinforce one another to prevent serious inequalities in mental equipments and inherited aptitudes and dispositions. A set of individuals brought together with the impress of different environments on them find it extremely irksome to conform to a common discipline or standard, and do so

Indian Individualism

at not a little sacrifice of individuality. It will be a grave mistake to argue from it a similar sacrifice on the part of the community, who share more or less a common inheritance and have much the same inherited aptitudes and dispositions, and are reconciled furthermore to the position allotted to them both by social theory and philosophical doctrine. The gardener finds it troublesome to deal with plants of which the seed is derived from various sources, and has to exercise very severe pruning to get them into the shape he desires. But the crop grown from pedigree stock is of more or less uniform character, and does not demand a similar exercise of the pruning knife.

A Telling Instance

The individuals in a caste are born to the regulations and disciplines which are peculiar to the caste, and therefore have not the irksome consciousness of any exercise of authority in these matters, such as one unfamiliar with them would feel when required to conform to them. The common failure of English educated members of a caste in these days to observe caste rules, which may go so far as deliberate disobedience if they could but escape excommunication, is an indication, if any were necessary, of the difficulties of moulding to one shape people drawn from different environments and with varying aptitudes. To conform to them in such circumstances demands a great deal more of discipline and mental effort.

The members of a caste escape this necessity. They miss, however, the exercise of the will which it demands. What is more important, especially in the present connection, is that, not having had these disciplines and exercises of the will in order to conform to situations and conditions more or less unfamiliar, they find concerted action difficult except along customary grooves. It is true that that is all that is required where all castes are true to their professions, and new and unfamiliar situations did not arise such as have to be met with in these transition times. Joint action in caste matters would tend to be instinctive, automatic and to that extent perfect. It would be difficult of attainment where it is demanded from the members of the same caste, and still more so when they are drawn from different castes. There is strength in the proverbial bundle of sticks tied together, but it is difficult to bind together the twigs that are still on the tree, for they diverge too much to be bent without breaking. They cannot be tied together unless they are broken off from the tree first.

Question of Concerted Action

The individuals in Western societies have no connections so vital to the community as those of a caste. They are therefore able to unite in various ways and for different purposes, and exert their united strength in each one of these combinations; where the caste can do so is only in the specified fields of caste action. If that is a drawback, drawback it is, only because caste

has ceased to function properly. The individuals of a caste have escaped the cramping influences of mechanical regulations. The West has set its face against caste and has no word of condemnation too severe for an organisation which confines individual enterprise and initiative to its narrow limits. That is natural to a people who offer the individual the whole field of national life for the display and exercise of his talents. That policy has, however, set at nought the influences of heredity and environment that might have been much better utilised, and therefore has caused no small waste of mental energy in the conflict of inherited mental equipments and aptitudes with the profession one has to choose. That is serious in itself, for after all the choice of a profession according to one's inclination or ability is not possible to many even in the West.

Waste in the West

What is far more serious is that in rejecting the principle of caste organisation, it has had to accept organisations based on principles more questionable from the standpoint of human personality. Concerted action in habitual grooves of custom is one thing; the same in organisations of individuals, drawn perhaps from the same stratum of society but with different qualities of temperament and intellect, is quite another. Conformity to the discipline and requirements of an organisation of this type demands not merely the subordination of the individual will to the collective will, where individual wills have not been attuned

to one common purpose by common inheritance of common environments. Furthermore, the action is, more often than not, in connection with interests which are not so uniform as in caste, and where, therefore, differences of opinion as to the lines of correct action are apt to arise. Mere mechanical obedience alone can be expected from those to whom the problems before the organisation are difficult for comprehension, a surrender to the majority on the part of those who do not agree as to the method of solution. But these demand exercise of the intellect and the will, the first in a lesser degree than the second. Obedience to decisions is mechanical to most and voluntary to but a few.

Origin of Surrender to Majority

It is this that affects the larger part, the worst feature of organisation. There are none of the influences of consanguinity, of common life or inherited inclinations, none of those spontaneous impulses to divest from mechanical obediences the more baneful of the reactions. Self-interest alone furnishes the one standpoint for judging the action decided on, the interest of the individual as he has been able to comprehend it with reference to himself, and that is by no means so wholesome a motive. Caste, when it sprang to action, did so from the spontaneity of common impulses rather than the intellectual grasp of the issues at stake, and we have seen how caste has tended to purify impulses and motives of individual action.

Supremacy of Self-interest

There is, therefore, in caste organisation none of the deleterious influences on the individual which fashion him to specific purposes, thus impeding self-expression as determined by his past and by his training. What is true of caste is true of other Indian organisations. The children secured their education in their craft from the father. In higher education as well, individual contact with the teacher was insisted on, and the limitation of the number of pupils to a few rendered possible considerable intimacy in relationship, and greater facilities to vary instruction and training to suit individual requirements and aptitudes. The education such as that of the West and of modern India has little reference to individual capacity, plans courses and studies with little reference to the varying aptitudes and capacities of the class, and therefore tends to dull down the student to a common average standard. It is little more than instruction. What was imparted in the solitude or the isolation of the forest by *Rishis*, or to a small circle of students gathered under the roof of a rich man or the *guru*, in close daily association with the teacher, was real education, for it rested on individual discipline and had reference to every deficiency of the pupil in point of intellect, of character, and of parentage as judged from the close contacts of daily association. That was education worth the name. How many are the distinguished men in important walks in life in the West and men in India today, who have singled out the personal contact

Indian Educational Principles

they were privileged to have with their professors as the most important of the influences that shaped their character and destiny? The point however to be stressed in this connection is not the quality of education, but the prevention of the possibility to conform to a general average of thought and standard, and the mechanical regulations which it involves.

Individualism in Religion

We may now turn to religion. Sufficient has been written in the chapter on this subject to realise that in no field has the individual been left to himself so much as in his relations to his God. A religion comprehensive enough to embrace every form of worship, from the abstract contemplation of the Divine to the worship of stone, could not visit with any serious penalty the individual who failed to conform to a particular tenet or dogma. Nor was there any occasion for the dissentient individual to make much of his defections and claim a following, or for conforming to unacceptable doctrines to the prejudice of his conscience. There is no joint worship enforced in Hindu religion. The individual may worship at home or in the temple at times he chooses when the religious emotions inclined him. It is true that joint worship has its advantages. But they do not lie in the direction of communion with God. Hindus value it as the best worship which comes straight from the heart, spontaneous, unaffected and warm. Their worship is for assimilation with God, and not for bowing to

his will as in the West. Hindu prayers are intended for spiritual rather than moral strength. It is not therefore surprising, if place and time are considered of little moment by the side of the impulse itself which is at its best when it arises, and has its fullest effect when it spends itself fully and immediately in prayer. That the individual is saved from mechanical observances of form is obvious. It is the emotion in its fulness and purity that is sought for, for then alone is its reaction on the individual wholesome and the least uncertain.

We may now pass on to Indian charity. The charitable disposition of India is fortunately recognised all over the World. It has been a singular feature of India that, in spite of poverty and starvation which occasionally affected many millions, the State did not find it necessary to undertake poor relief. But along with this acknowledgment there is the criticism that charity is not organised, and that there is too much of indiscriminate charity and of encouraging the able-bodied to live on alms rather than on the earnings of their strong arms. There is much force in the criticism but those who make it do not quite understand the Hindu standpoint.

Indian Charity

Charity is given in India as much for the benefit of the giver as for the benefit of the recipient. Like mercy it is twice blessed. The donor, who directs his bank to pay monthly varying sums to institutions for the poor or the sick, does so, more from intellectual perception of

his responsibility to society as a wealthy citizen. He sees no actual suffering or destitution to enlarge his sympathy, and misses the pleasure of seeing beggars satisfied with alms received from him. He has, therefore, no hesitation to turn a deaf ear to the appeals of a beggar or even to hand him over to the police. The Hindu welcomes personal contact with distress and suffering, for it increases the responsiveness of his heart to the sufferings of others. Sir N. G. Chandavarkar, when he questioned a party of Gosains why they did not work instead of wandering throughout the country as beggars, received the astonishing answer that their function was to keep alive the sentiments of charity in the country.

Disinclination to Organisation

There remain to be mentioned a few other fields where Hindu objection to organisation may clearly be seen. No Hindu physicians, not even of the highest standing, who enjoy very large practice, would ever dream of imposing a uniform scale of fees; much less would they demand payment for services rendered. They leave the patient to pay according to his means and his sense of gratitude. Pupils at indigenous schools paid no regular fee, but collections were made on certain days in the year as on the occasion of the worship of the Goddess of Learning when parents contributed according to their means. The Indian juggler or the snake charmer even today trusts to individual charity following the performances he gives in public.

A gift or favour, bestowed unasked, pleases far more than when made as a result of a request. Subordinates seldom ask for promotion or advancement, but trust to their own faithful discharge of duty and the goodwill of the superior for it. Hindu wives would trust to their husbands' perspicacity to get what they have set their hearts upon. If the trust is misplaced, they would rather go without what they longed for.

Refined Sense

Similarly, parents set the highest value on the discharge of obligations made spontaneously by their children, and would submit to privations rather than run the risk of bidding them do their duty against their own inclinations. A great deal of silly nonsense has been written on the absence of a word in Indian Languages to correspond to the English word *thanks*, and the people, who of all peoples on earth honour the obligations of ancestors from generation to generation, have been accused of lacking the sense of gratitude. In the Hindu, service, kindness or help received in any form sinks deeper than the heart into the soul, not to be recognised and done with by a word, but returned many fold in similar service at the first opportunity sublimated by the kindliest of thoughts. The Hindu is suprised if he is thanked, and asks "Why thanks for this little done?" A friend of Nivedita resented her thanking him for help he had rendered. And Westerners may well remember that, when thanked, they say "Don't mention". Kindness from a father long dead is, when

occasion arises, returned to the son or grandson. Hindu readers can recall many instances of the kind referred to above, but for the information of Western readers I should like to refer to two incidents within my own experience.

One evening, several years ago, I happened to engage a jutka to go home. I fixed the fare, and had gone hardly a furlong when there was a heavy downpour. The driver cursed audibly at his ill-luck, for if he had but waited a few minutes, he could have got a much higher fare from me or from others caught in the rain. By the time home was reached both were wet and, taking pity on the driver and forgetting for the moment the oaths he had indulged in, I gave him a four anna bit more. Several months afterwards, it so happened that the same conveyance was brought for my use, but not recognising the driver whom I had met on the first occasion only at night, I asked what the fare was: "No, Sir, I shall not fix the fare for you. Give anything you like." I was astonished but insisted on the fare being fixed to avoid trouble afterwards. The jutkaman was obdurate. "No, I won't, are you not the gentleman who gave me four annas more that rainy night? That silver bit was sacred to me, and I shall remember your kindness till my death. Give me what you like. I shall be satisfied. Why, Sir, I should take you free."

A Jutkawalla

One more experience. It happened once that the wayward son of a respectable and highly

cultured Ayurvedic physician was convicted by a magistrate for assault, and sentenced to a fine of Rs. 100 or 4 weeks' imprisonment. The father was not prepared for the sentence and was not ready with the money, and he was about 16 miles from his place. He made enquiries to find whether there was any respectable gentleman in the neighbourhood, and hearing a gentleman's name mentioned, made for his house and explained briefly the situation. The gentleman, stranger as the visitor was, gave at once the money, and the fine was paid and the son escaped imprisonment. Years afterwards the son of the gentleman, long since dead, went for consultation to the same physician now grown famous. When the consultation was over, the son offered him fees but he politely declined, and for reason related to him what he had not heard before, the story of the good turn his father had done him. The physician was pressed hard to accept but he would not, and he insisted on his supplying gratis the medicines he had prescribed.

The Physician's Debt

The high and refined sense of gratitude is fast decaying. The pressure of poverty and the dissolution of the old institutions which nursed and fostered it, and the mad rush after the West are making havoc of this virtue. More than all, the principle of Indian individualism, religious, spiritual and ethical is now turned topsyturvy. Hindus had imposed serious limitations on the exercise of the self. Like the collar of railings to the young sapling which secures a clean and

straight trunk for a good height, but allows the grown up tree to branch out in full and luxuriant vigour away from the earth, the individuals, disciplined and controlled by the Joint family and caste, had been allowed full freedom to expand only in the higher spheres of selflessness and service. That freedom is still retained, but alas! the self too is allowed full play, and released from the rigorous control of caste and the obligations of the Joint family, branches out unhampered in selfish activities and is so occupied with these that the finer growths have become all but impossible. What was a magnificent tree once, tall, luxuriant, clean of stem and graceful in branch and leaf, and giving shade and fruit, is fast becoming a misshapen bush, the branches spreading over the ground with ugly and tortuous bents, still in heaven's sunshine, but earthward in inclination and spread.

Decay of Refinement

Having given two anecdotes to illustrate the old spirit, let me not fail to reveal the obverse side. A Hindu officer in high position with high academic distinctions pockets all his gains at the card table of his club, but when he loses, is not ashamed to postpone or evade payment! An aged Brahmin widow elected to share what little she could share with her eldest son and his large family living in great poverty, and often starved with them, while a younger son, educated at the cost of his mother's jewellery supplemented by the

The Obverse

contributions the elder brother was able to make when he was better off, lived in high style scarcely a mile off with two cars to call his own. The mother was asked to stay with him, but the old lady, true to the Hindu spirit, thought her place was with the son in poverty. But the younger son was a stranger to the spirit, and it did not occur to him that his duty did not end with the offer, but should have extended at least to payment of a monthly allowance to her, if not to the brother as well. In the old days, the mother would never have been denied her wish of having both her sons and their families under one roof.

These are experiences that indicate the tendencies of an individualism which has now neither economic nor spiritual checks. For all the cultivation of self-regarding virtues in the West, the individual there is alive to the duty he owes to the State and to his obligations to society. In India, the foreign character of the Government cannot rouse in the individual the same sense of duty, and caste has been sufficiently loosened for its sanctions to be operative, or for social sanctions to develop. The individual that is shaped out thus is a danger to society. There can be no question that, *pari passu* with the development of economic individualism now thoughtlessly encouraged in the name of economic efficiency and production, there should develop a sense of duty to the State, and a respect for public opinion above and beyond that of caste.

The Corrective

Until these develop, we shall have to reckon with selfishness of the kind described above. We shall find the ancient courtesies and refinements used as a convenient cloak to cover stark selfishness, and the individual's game with society sought to be based on the impossible formula that the gains shall all be his, the losses all the society's.

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13. THE INDIAN LITERATURE

Literature and Life—Necessary Dominance of Religious Note—Importance to Ethical Teaching—Absence of Finality in Western Life—Purpose of Western Literature—Emotional Culture—Less of Will—Sense of God—Treatment of Nature—Appearance of Exaggeration—Supremacy of Religious Motives—Doctrine of Karma—Exacting Idealism.

THE Literature of India may now be examined to see whether it confirms or negatives the interpretation of Indian civilisation attempted in the previous pages. The literature of a people reflects their inmost thoughts, ideals and aspirations. By its idealisation or caricature it seeks to perfect their institutions. It dwells on the many problems of human life and existence, and lifts the thoughts of the people from their daily avocation, and seeks to give proportion and balance to their endeavours, by helping to understand standpoints other than their own by refining their thoughts and actions out of the cruder elements, and thereby makes for culture. It exposes social evils, examines social forces appearing in society and shows their bearing on institutions and customs. It restores flagging enthusiasms to their full vigour, and removes despair and moral prostration. These services it renders through refinements and subtleties

Literature and Life

of language whose artistry, apart from its content, is in itself a refining influence on the intellect as well as on the emotion.

Religion enters so largely into the life of the Hindus, and so much of Indian literature is of Brahmin authorship that one expects to find not only a large percentage of books on religion, but also the religious note pervading in what is not professedly religious, and one is not disappointed. The Ramayana and the Mahabbharatha which form the backbone of Hindu literature have woven into its texture, in complex and intricate patterns, religious tenets and dogmas. Even books on science and medicine do not escape these influences. *Sushruta* enjoins on the student and practitioner of medicine the worship of *Dhanvantari*, the God of Medicine, to realise the qualities appropriate to their profession.

Necessary Dominance of Religious Note

Along with the religious note goes a great deal of ethical teaching. No occasion appropriate for a sermon or a discourse on human duties is missed. We accordingly see the wife lecturing to the husband on the duties of the husband as *Sakuntala* does to *Dushyanta* when he fails to recognise her and questions her identity. A subject may similarly stand before a king to pour forth on the responsibilities of his high office. The disquisition may cover the whole field of human conduct as in *Vidura Niti*. The inclusion of these ethical teachings, some very long, may not be quite up to Western requirements, or may be

Importance to Ethical Teaching

even against its standard of literary art, but the beauty of the teaching, the universality of its appeal, its equipoise of thought and the appropriateness of its setting are more than ample compensation for any departure in this respect. As a matter of fact, to Hindus who seek literature for its religious emotionalism and ethical appeals the sermons are most welcome. Most get whole poems by heart to repeat portions of them on proper occasions in the course of conversation, or, when alone, to get ideas contained in them to soak into their sub-consciousness.

Absence of Finality in Western Life

It may be said with justice that, outside of its ethical and religious appeals, there is very little of what one accustomed to Western literature would look for. In the highly dynamic character of Western society and the predominance of the sense of right and of the motive of self-interest, there is a perpetual agitation arising from individuals having to face new and unfamiliar situations, or from individuals or classes having to confront one another, or from society as a whole drifting from its moorings. There are upheavals of new interests and collisions of classes and of individuals, which keep society more or less in permanent commotion. No civilisation or religion or ethical dogma that would last for all time, and reconcile people to the status they are born into has been found. The solution for every problem is temporary. Things are adjusted for the moment to go wrong again, when new formulæ have to be discovered,

which, in their turn again, would not serve the first serious test and will yield place to still newer ones taking society in the West perhaps forward as a whole, but without any finality in the adjustment of classes or communities.

The rapid changes required in social arangement cause no small hardship to individuals and classes. It compels them to be vigilant of their interest and prepared for new situations. They have therefore to understand better the interaction of character and the interplay of human passions. Western literature is therefore, to a large extent, preoccupied with these, and rightly, because the portrayal of these helps the reader to judge character and deal better with it in different situations. Nowhere is this more clear than in the Western novel. It exposes social evils as they exist and calls public attention to them in all their nakedness as Dickens did, or it envisages situations as they might arise on the adoption of principles whether good or bad, to help more especially the less intelligent among the public to visualise the working of the problems involved. It does other services quite as useful, but in these cases the problem is worked out through the interaction of characters. The analysis of conversation so as to reveal the motive or feeling behind helps the reader to make the analysis for himself in actual life. Nor are the minute dissections made by a novelist like Charlotte Bronte any the less helpful. Her novels might have been her

Purpose of Western Literature

experiences reproduced, rather than her creations; but their reading helps sensitive people to perceptions of emotion as delicate as hers, which might have been ordinarily beyond their grasp. The problems dealt with in higher literature such as the Drama and the Epic, though more fundamental and far reaching, are more or less of the same character. Shakespeare for the most part dealt with family affections as they influence action. So long as human family endures, Shakespeare will be read with interest and profit. The epics deal with heroic action in the wider field of human life; they have a large canvas and require a brush correspondingly large. Epic, drama, or novel, Western literature deals with the relations of man and man rather than of man and God.

The relations between man and man in Indian society were so well regulated that there were no recurring problems of adjustment except those which were involved in the admission into the Aryan fold, from time to time, of Non-Aryan communities. The arrangements were so well ordered that new situations, demanding new formulæ for action, arose but rarely. The individual was associated with fellows of his caste, and was brought in social contact with members of other castes but rarely. The caste as a whole determined the line of action in regard to its relations with other castes. The action and interaction of character was therefore limited to the very narrow limits of a close brotherhood. Such interaction was along well-established traditional

lines of contact and was sanctioned by usage and strengthened by custom. There was little reason for the display of the various human moods and temperaments and characters as they change and are changed by the complex vicissitudes of human life. But, if conflict of character is seldom the theme, human emotion is the special field of Hindu literature. In all literature that ought to be the first concern, for its cultivation alone makes for sympathy and understanding, or in other words, for culture.

Emotional Culture

Human emotion is there in Western literature in greater variety, natural to the variety of experiences, but in gentility, depth and richness much less than in Hindu literature. In tenderness of family ties, in devotion, in self-effacement, and in the pangs of separation, the West is always behind. The West tries to repress emotion and turn its energy to useful lines of action. It is apprehensive that any surrender to an emotional wave may fling one on to the rocks of inaction, exhausted and incapable of effort. There is much to be said in favour of that standpoint. At the same time it is easily conceivable that, on occasions where the emotion is in conflict with motives of self-interest, the surrender to the latter becomes easier, and does not make for the development of the more humane side of character. If Hindus have allowed free scope for emotion, let it be remembered that it helps to lighten the burden of their duty. It may be that they fail to utilise emotion in the furtherance of self-interest, but they preserve, however, their

compassion. Hence arises the refinement of thought and feeling in Hindu literature which Sir William Monier Williams considered was unmatched. *Sakuntala* indeed drew the infinite admiration of Goethe as well, because of the purity, delicacy of refinement and feelings in the drama, so singularly free from exhibitions of any gross human passion such as too often disfigure Shakespearian drama. What is true of *Sakuntala* is also true of other Hindu dramas.

The abundance of human feeling is in striking contrast to the scarcity of a conflict of wills. Of conflict of feelings there is a great deal, but there is no will directed to a particular course of action coming in violent collision with another, and therefore, none of the exhibitions of courage or of the other more manly virtues. Indeed, whereas in the West it is courage that leads to self-sacrifice, in India it is self-sacrifice that leads to courage. Devotion makes *Savitri* face even the God of Death. For a will as magnificent as that of Satan in Paradise Lost, persistent and defiant in defeat, we may search in vain the whole gamut of Hindu literature. It is so because Hindu social organisation precluded situations which required will of that character. We have the exaggerated self-importance of a *Hiranyakasipu* wanting to set himself up as God and brought into conflict with the devotion to God of his own son. The disparity of forces as between father and son, or as between man and God is too great for the conflict to be of uncertain issue. The nearest

Less of Will

approach to a magnificent will, persistent and undeterred by the colossal character of the task before it, is that of King *Bhagiratha*, who is said to have diverted the mighty Ganges itself, to revive the multitude of his brothers killed by the curse of a saint disturbed from his penance. Even here the will is born of feeling—the grief of one over the loss of his brothers. The prolonged penances of saints, facing trials and temptations of the highest magnitude, display wills of magnificent character, pure and unsullied and sustained over incredibly long periods, but are undertaken for spiritual exaltation and for spiritual strength, and there is no conflict of character involved.

Sense of God

For the display of human passion there is even less scope in Hindu literature, because of an ever-present sense of the immanence of God, before whom passions are to be kept under proper control. In the West, on the other hand, they find much fuller expression. Excepting of course the grosser ones, hatred, jealousy, greed, anger and other human weaknesses are given much fuller and realistic expression in the West. It is as though the West perceived very little of the hand of God in the circumstances in which man found himself and that he believed that the final issue rested with himself alone. Passion must necessarily receive much fuller scope in an outlook so narrow. The same people who strive not to fail in propriety, in however small a measure, on occasions of impressive and punctilious ceremonial may indulge in horse-play on occasions when their

behaviour is under less exacting scrutiny. A similar check is exerted on human conduct believed to be under the immediate eye of God.

The sense of the immanence of God has determined the Hindu attitude towards Nature. Nature is not something different and apart from man, created for his benefit and to be utilised by him as best as he can. For the Hindu, nature and man pulsate with the same life. Beasts and birds are represented as having the same sentiments and affections as man. The female bird pines for the answer of her mate to her call. The lotus opens out its perfections to the touch of the sun and closes as it sets. Many a pretty fancy is woven round the bee and the flower it visits, which is said to be its bride. Unable to part with the bee, the flower closes its petals and imprisons the bee in its bosom. When the flower has faded and dropt, its husband flies round dashing its head against the ground in grief. One has to see the carpenter bee flying round fallen flowers to realise the beauty of the description. *Sakuntala's* departure causes grief not only to her father and companions of the hermitage, but the animals and plants she loved, and her leave taking from each of these is extremely touching. The bird *Jatayu* tries to rescue Sita the daughter of his friend *Janaka* from the clutches of Ravana. The swan drawe the portrait of Nala for *Damayanti* who had set her heart on him. These instances should suffice to show that man and nature are considered as one and the same object, and of the

Treatment of Nature

same divinity. For an attitude similar to it in English literature we have to come to Wordsworth and Shelley.

It has been pointed out that the higher passions of man are but rarely portrayed in Hindu literature. If human passion is in defect, the finer emotions are dealt with almost to the point of exaggeration. Western readers accustomed to great moderation in regard to them have been somewhat repelled by what is to them an excess. That is a fact which arises from a life in which the main endeavour is the culture of the emotion rather than the will. In the West, it is the other way round. There emotion is made to wait at the door of Intellect. In India, we have seen how wide is the circle of the family affections, and how these have been kept above the caprices and prejudices of self-interest; an emotionalism so cultivated must necessarily be much more intense than the one restricted to a narrow circle where distinctions of mine and thine obtruded on the mind very much oftener. We have noticed too that the predominant note of Hindu life is self-control rather than discipline, and that, once self-control is released, the full expression of emotion is with difficulty prevented except by the exercise of the will. To this rule, that feelings are liable to be exhibited in their full vigour, detached from immediate circumstances, there is however one exception. It may seem strange but it is nevertheless true, that love born from passion always comes to

Appearance of Exaggeration

grief in Indian stories. Whether in *Sakuntala* or *Damayanti* or *Sita*, the happy and almost unobstructed union of lovers is very soon followed by prolonged separation and trials and sorrows during which each keeps faithful to the other, and their reunion comes of a love sobered by experience and refined of the cruder elements of the flesh usually associated with it. One cannot escape the conclusion that the lower forms of love were discountenanced.

When we go to the higher fields of literature as the epics, the religious motive asserts itself a great deal more; devotion to truth is no less predominant. To help his father to keep his word, Rama goes into exile; to keep his own word, King Harischandra parts with his kingdom, and later, his own wife and child. No devotion to truth can be higher, nor again can filial affection be deeper than that of *Bhishma* who took a vow never to marry so that his father might take in wedlock the daughter of a fisherman on whom he had set his heart, and observe the condition that the son born of the union should be the heir.

Supremacy of Religious Motives

What strikes the foreign reader is the senile passion of the aged king. The Indian reader is impressed, on the other hand, with the spirit of sacrifice of *Bhishma* which even the questionable passion of the father could not suppress. To pass on, we cannot find greater fairness in battle than in the rule that those who fight each other may do so only with the same kind of weapon. *Karna* shows to his foe

the vital spot where a wound inflicted would kill him. A greater charity could not be met with than that of the weak and emaciated couple who made over to the beggar, who happened to come at the time, the one meal that they had set before them after weeks of starvation. These are virtues which seem to be beyond the limits of human perfection. Nothing but a religious idealism, which looks upon life as but an insignificant fragment of a larger life, could help one to rise to such heights. But the perspective is even wider. There is woven into the texture of Hindu stories the eternal problem, ever present in the Hindu consciousness, of the relation between the one individual soul and the universal soul. It is only the more subtle intellects perhaps that can follow it in all, but there is a considerable literature in which the authors proclaim in so many words their attempt to give the stories a deeper meaning. The inner meaning is not perhaps obvious to the Western intellect, but what is of importance is that the class of readers for whom it is meant do not miss it, and are therefore influenced by it.

There is too, among the strands of Indian stories, the thread of the doctrine of *Karma* more obvious and more easily followed. The origins and consequences of human action are traced to a succession of individual existences. Strange and anomalous incidents, the close associations of strangers or instinctive attractions and repulsions are explained by reference to this doctrine. The

Doctrine of Karma

penalty for a sin committed in one birth is paid in a subsequent one, so does reward missed in one come after a succession of lives. The individual is thus made to realise that he may not escape consequences of his action, no matter how insignificant it may be. In almost every story the doctrine is illustrated so that it soaks into the mind of the reader.

Exacting Idealism

The whole of Indian literature is thus pervaded with an atmosphere of exacting idealism which demands of man conduct of the highest ethical perfection, in which there is no trace of selfishness, and which is not subject to the narrow criterion of appropriateness of time and place, but is above and beyond it, and will answer for all time. At the same time, it rejects as unworthy the self-regarding virtues. That literature of this description will go far to support the principles underlying Indian civilisation described above goes without saying; it helps the Hindu to reconcile himself to the position he is born into in this life, and to preserve the crystal purity of his mind free from agitation and impurities, and keep without distortions the reflection of the Infinite in his bosom.

14. INDIAN WOMEN

An Inapplicable Standpoint—The Western Woman's Past—Her Present Status—Indian Women in Ancient Times—Peril of Miscegenation—Fall and Recovery in Status—Effects of Muslim Rule—Mistake of British Rule—Helplessness and Exaggerated Self-denial—Virtue Making for Weakness—Matrimonial Necessities—Legislation or Education no Remedy—Real Basis for Reform Movements—Freedom of Movement Wanted—An Examination of Sati—Custom Exalted at Society's Expense—Society Helpless, Lingering Instances—Social Recognition of the Dancing Girl—Her Moral Standard, Contrasted with the West—Ignorance of Social Reformers—Wrong Outlooks—Economic Freedom Important—Orthodoxy.

CONSIDERABLE light has been thrown on the position of the Indian woman in the Home and in the Joint family, but it is hardly sufficient to reveal her true status at present so obscured by the ignorant writings of ill-informed writers, Indian as well as European, who have measured the degradation of Indian woman by the degree of her divergence from her European sister, as though the level the latter has attained is the standard for all races and climes. The

position of Western woman herself is not understood by many of these writers. Ignorant of the growth of women's rights, they imagine that women in the West have come to occupy their present position there, not through social or economic necessity, but the chivalry of man. A survey of the changes that have taken place during the 2000 years of European history would soon undermine that self-complacency and would convince any one that women's position improved with the growth of individualism, and received setbacks when individualism could not be allowed to be the dominating principle of society.

An Inapplicable Standpoint

We find that in the democracies of ancient Greece and Rome women enjoyed a high status, but that it disappeared during the formative period of Europe when the dominance of the Nordic races had to be established over Europe, and a new social order, with all that it involves as a preliminary of the subsidence of long established rights, ideals and interests, had to be evolved. Freedom to women at that stage might have delayed, if it did not render impossible, the integrity and distinct identity of the superior races. She was accordingly withdrawn into the narrow circle of the home, and theories of her sinfulness and inferiority to man, derived from the legends of the Bible, were developed in harmony with her altered position from which she did not emerge until the new order was firmly established, and until the kingdoms became secure.

The Western Woman's Past

The wife adopted the name of the husband and the property she brought from her parents passed into the hands of her husband. She could not inherit or transfer property, not even contract debts. That absolute dependence did not alter for the better until late in the 19th century, when the increasing urbanisation and the progress of individualism, which followed the Industrial Revolution, had so far perceptibly weakened family affections that she could no longer trust to them to remedy her helplessness in law. The higher status and rights she acquired, far from being the cause, are the result of the growing need of mutual companionship for both man and woman to compensate in some measure for the stresses and strains of a machine-ridden life.

The position of Western womanhood, so often paraded before Indians, is for the most part the position of the industrialised woman. If she was the drudge of the home, she is now the drudge of the factory as well.

Her Present Status

The peace and quiet of the home, divested of its religious atmosphere, is too tame for nerves hyper-excited by the roar and rush and the tensions of the factory. All the richness and depth of her emotional life have been sacrificed to meet the demand of urban and factory life, and all that she has obtained in return is a closer acquaintance with the stern realities of life and the equipment to meet them. She has advanced to individualism at the sacrifice of the individuality of her sex.

The principles of progress underlying women's history in the West will be found beneath her history in India as well. In ancient days Hindu women occupied a position of equality with man.

Indian Woman in Ancient Times

The equality of wealth and opportunity of Aryan tribes, settled down as agriculturists with land in abundance, available just for the trouble of removal of the jungle, naturally made for a spirit of equality. She married generally after puberty, and chose a husband after her own heart, and she could remarry on the death of her first husband. She could study the Vedas. She moved freely among men. The husband could not part with property without her consent. She took part in the sacrificial rites. There were scholars among them who carried on philosophical discussions at the court of kings. A number of Vedic hymns are of their composition. There are hymns in the Vedas in support of every one of these statements. Indeed, it is these that made Sir W. Wilson declare that "in no nation of antiquity were women held so much in esteem as among the Hindus".

That was 4000 years ago and her position changed with changing needs. When the Aryan settlers extended their settlements into the Indo-Gangetic plains and devised the caste system to preserve Aryan integrity amidst a vast aboriginal population, the freedom which women had enjoyed would, if continued, have made for mis-alliances which would have rendered racial exclusiveness before long a thing of the past.

Peril of Miscegenation

To comprehend the difficulty of the problem, one has but to look to the relations between the Whites and the Negroes in the United States, where the enormous barrier between the races is kept inviolate by a vigilant opinion swift in its vengeance. The problem of the Aryans was far graver, for their numerical relation with the inferior races was the reverse of what it is in the States. The difficulties of maintaining racial standards and integrity increase with the degree of preponderance of the race or races excluded. If 100 millions of Americans have to resort to segregation of 11 millions of Negroes in towns, provide separate compartments in trains, seats in trams, waiting-rooms in railway stations, and shut them out of universities, schools and churches, it is easy to imagine how much more complex must have been the problem of the Aryan minority to prevent intermixture and swamping by the aboriginals. The voluntary choice of husbands, the right to hold property, freedom to move among men would have made for rapid intermixtures. Threatened racial integrity was not, however, the only inducement. There was super-added the exclusive spirit of an aristocracy—not, however, of a different order of beings as in the States. In the meanwhile, the Joint family had arisen as an institution to preserve the continuity of the family environment and tradition, and the marriage of girls before their opinions and habits were fixed made for harmony and good feeling in the family circle. There were, therefore, a number

of factors which co-operated to lower the status of women, and ultimately to reduce her to the position of a dependant on man. Until the caste system was evolved and rooted deep in the popular mind, and caste sanctions became operative, the position was uncertain, at one time wholly degraded, at another elevated. The contradictory statements in Manu and the conflicts of views among the authors of *Srutis* and *Smritis* indicate that the Aryan mind struggled hard to over-ride social necessities and preserve their ancient attitude of equality. But the forces were too many. The spread of Buddhism tended to bring into fashion the ascetic view of life, and the prohibition of the marriage of monks, designed as it was to prevent the formation of a priestly caste like the Brahmins, tended to place women in an exceedingly false position. In spite of it, in later Buddhism and during the Hindu revival which followed, women recovered a great portion of lost ground.

Fall and Recovery in Status

The revival of Hinduism helped to string together on a common thread the races and their intermixtures. The sense of greater security of caste integrity was beneficial in its effects on women's position. The right to adoption and to own property were conceded. The theory of perpetual tutelage was denied. The advent of the Muhammadans arrested, however, further progress. It is not true, as is often asserted, that the early marriage of Hindus was one of the reactions.

Effects of Muslim Rule

That began early, as has been pointed out, to ensure the smooth working of the Joint family, and there is Sastraic sanction for the practice as early as the *Gautama Sutras* of the Gupta period. The veiling of women and the *zenana* system were, however, customs borrowed from the Muhammadans under the stress of the unsettled conditions of the country. Under the insecurity of the Hindu Kingdoms and their preoccupation with war, the growth of Hindu law ceased. Even in those times, a *Vidyaranya* rose and conceded to women nearly the same position she had in the Vedic period. Women distinguished themselves as administrators, authors and commentators. *Ahalyabai*, *Padmini*, *Bhanumati*, and *Lakshmi Devi*, the author of the '*Vedanta Chintamani*' belong to this latter period of Hindu efflorescence in peninsular India.

The arrest of the growth of Hindu law which began with the Muhammadan period continued during the British period. Indeed, it went much further. It is sad to have to attribute a share to the British who have so much to their credit in the abolition of Infanticide and Sati, but the fact cannot be disputed. The earlier British policy of having Hindu law interpreted for British judges by Hindu pandits gave place to one of judgments based on interpretations by Europeans themselves, and for their guide they took the code of Manu, and woman had to revert to the position assigned to her there, although she had made considerable

Mistake of British Rule

progress since those early days. The theories of perpetual tutelage, of limited estates, incapacity for contracts, the priority of male heirs of even the fourth degree, and the enforcement of conjugal rights were the consequences of a policy that sought to over-ride custom and usage when they were in conflict not with the school of Hindu law for the time prevailing, but with an earlier authority. The European judges forgot that law is an organic growth, that judicial decisions based on texts, however hoary but long obsolete, tend to throw back society by several centuries and petrify it in that condition. These early mistakes of interpretation have been but partially rectified, partially because of the natural anxiety of a foreign government not to interfere with the position sanctioned by courts.

If the set-back was due to the ignorance of the British, there was at the same time no likelihood of progress under them, except what has been indirectly engendered by the contact with the culture diffused by them. The progressive ruralisation of the country and the increasing pressure on land resulting in poverty, in lower standards of life, the political impotence of the aristocracy and their social ineffectiveness, and above all, the truncated life of the people as a whole were factors inimical to the progress of women. Women's opportunity is not in man's necessity but in his prosperity. Under the one she is capable of the greatest self-effacement and sacrifice, and under the other of very great selfishness and exaction. Woman would not be

woman, were she different. Where has there been during the past 500 years the period when man was at his full moral stature, in the full enjoyment of those powers which develop a sense of his larger responsibilities to woman? Could he at any time entertain the conviction that he was master in his own house? He had to be an arbiter of his own destiny to feel that he was the arbiter of woman's fate. When face to face with moral and physical disabilities, it was not for him to feel for the altered position of woman, or for her to demand the restoration of her rights or add to them. She drew on her vast reservoirs of spirituality, the inheritance from her heroines *Sita* and *Savitri*, to give no trouble on her own account to man in his trials and tribulations. By her devotion and self-effacement she rendered easy for him the endurance of the changed conditions.

Helplessness and Exaggerated Self-denial

But she went too far. Under the stress of poverty, the disregard of caste obligations and ineffective public opinion, the sense of social responsibility had weakened and the unquestioning devotion of the wife tended to weaken it further. Had she been, like her ancestors of the Vedic period, independent and free to move among men, she would have stopt where her service weakened rather than strengthened man. But, for long under tutelage, she knew nought else. Her service and devotion were true to her womanliness and culture, but there is a world

Virtue making for Weakness

of difference between service and devotion from an equal partner in life and from a helpless dependant.

There were many factors which drove both man and woman from the moral to the legal plane away below. In the growing dissolution of the Joint family ties and obligations, herself a dependant and coming last, if at all in the list of the beneficiaries of her husband's property, the one security for her as wife lay in the birth of a son or sons, and as mother, in the marriage of her daughters at the earliest opportunity and before she died. But bridegrooms were not to be had easily. The formation of sub-sects and sub-castes with increasing poverty had reduced the circle of choice, and it became narrower, for the well-to-do families decreased in number with the increase in poverty of the population. In the meanwhile, the value given to English education, far beyond its real worth, made those who received it appear as the most eligible matches, and fathers competed so keenly that they could be had only for dowries that nearly ruined the family of the bride. The greed of the bridgerooms and their parents knew no bounds. These difficulties made the choice still more limited. Bridegrooms were sought within the circle of relations between whom at least the exactions would be kept within bounds. Marriages were arranged at the earliest possible moment to avoid the risk of losing suitable boys or girls, and marriageable age descended rather than advanced. So are there girl mothers and

Matrimonial Necessities

virgin widows in India. To add to the gravity of the problem, the widower who wishes to marry again has to choose for wife a girl not beyond twelve, for widows are ineligible, and the tremendous disparity in age is one of the prolific causes of the many millions of widows in India.

Social reformers imagine that legislation or even education can effect a breach in this chain of formidable fortifications. Legislation too far in advance of social necessities is too often ineffective, except in the remote contingency of the State enforcing it. Education is even feebler in its effect. The prevailing impression that education by itself makes for progress is only partially true. What has made for progress of society, in the countries where it is widely diffused, is primarily the existence of abundant opportunities. Education helped rather in their proper utilisation than their creation. Education, in the absence of economic opportunity and political power to adjust social and economic conditions, makes for a sterile intellectualism destructive of character, or for imaginative idealism. What is needed for society is movement, the contact somewhere that will set up the ascent of strata and the descent of others to make room for them. Once society has power to move and begins to move, there are new classes formed, new interests developed, fresh contacts established, fresh outlooks and view-points stabilised, and society tries to drop customs, habits and codes that are found inadequate or irksome for others

Legislation or Education, no Remedy

better suited to the changing times. Social dislocation first, social adjustments afterwards.

What little advance women have been able to make among the educated classes is not so much due to the education they or their parents or husbands have received, as to the social and material advantages it has brought to them. It would be absurd to pretend, for example, that Brahmins ventured to cross the ocean because they perceived the foolishness of the prohibition relating to it. They gave no thought to it. They might have had fears about the possibility of ostracism on return, but the prizes awaiting a British degree were too tempting to deter them. They have been lax in regard to the rules of caste and early marriage in proportion as their official prestige or station in life enabled them to defy them with impunity.

Real Basis for Reform Movements

The problem arose first and the solution followed. So will solutions be found by society as problems arise, and they will arise when the formidable obstacles external to society no longer exist. In its long paralysed condition, society cannot remove social evils by mere intellectual apprehension of their consequences. Let men have more power, let the opportunities for advance, now too few under a wholly unequal competition, defective education and economic stagnation, increase, let them be allowed to grow to their full moral stature, and society will begin to grow and cast off its present slough. A frontal attack on

Freedom of Movement Wanted

established law and customs but rarely succeeds, for interests have grown and established themselves round each, and these will be roused to formidable opposition. Denunciations of social evils and abuses, even by prophets, have often failed and cost them their lives. Those fared better who trusted to the ideas they set in circulation to soak into the minds of the people, and dissolve away the habits of thought and the outlooks behind social and religious institutions, and undermine their functions. The task of the social reformer will come when society is forced out of its present harbour of ancient customs into the wind-tossed open sea outside.

An Examination of Sati

One is apt to recall the successful abolition of Sati as an argument against this line of thought. Before meeting it, it is necessary to clear away certain misconceptions regarding the custom. The resolve to die with their husbands rather than survive them is not a desire peculiar to Indian womanhood. In all countries and ages, there have been women who have shown that determination. They gave all to their husbands, sank their individuality in theirs, and when death separated them they found the void impossible to fill, and women alone are capable of that sublime love that triumphs over death. The history of every country has records of such divine love. In the literature of every country, it is a theme for the poets. In India, there have been more of them, because of the suffusion of religious emotionalism in every sphere of life, the spiritual,

individualism of the people, and the growth of customs that helped to further the devotion and purity of women.

We condemn customs, as we would live hedges that overgrow into the crop they were intended to safeguard. We may condemn even more severely the concentration of attention on the hedges to the neglect of the crop. The foreign conquest, the menace of a new religion and the preoccupations of Hindu kings had rendered caste walls impenetrable and customs rigid. Each reinforced the other. Customs had been made for society; the time soon came when society was looked upon as though it was made for customs. The mechanical regulations of an unchanging life in this world, now robbed of their vital elements which make for its health and vigour, gave too much room for indulgence in religious emotionalism and for the longing for the next world. *Chaitanya* and *Ramanuja*, whose creeds give so much room for emotional fervours, were among the later products of Hinduism when it was politically dominated by the foreigner. It was inevitable under these circumstances that what was determined by personal inclinations came to be established as a custom. It is for this latter that Hinduism deserves the fullest blame. Society may stand back helpless, subdued and overpowered by the devotion of a wife determined to burn with the body of her husband. But on no account should *Sati* have been permitted, much less enforced as

Custom Exalted at Society's Expense

a custom. Brahmin law-givers are guilty of twisting the texts to give religious sanction to the cruel custom. It is not necessary to go so far as to accuse them of the design that they wanted to prevent complications of claims arising from the widow to the property of the husband. Indeed it cannot be true, for there are reliable accounts of the dreadful rite to convince the impartial reader that the unhappy widow was appealed to for the performance of the rite not by the relations of the deceased who had to face the claims, but by members of her own family who had no claims to meet whether she was dead or alive. The torture of the texts was of a piece with the usual practice of the Brahmins to so interpret texts that customs arising from social necessity, whether imagined or real, are given Sastraic support.

A Misconception

To go back to the argument from the successful abolition of *Sati*, it will now have become obvious that the growth of *Sati* as a custom was really the result of the helplessness of Hindu society rather than any deliberate attempt on its part. It has already been pointed out in an earlier chapter how Hindu organisation tended to weaken volitional activity. The self-regulating activity of the society had been lost; it reconciled itself to the establishment as a custom of a rite, which was at first resorted to only by a few whose devotion had proved equal to a defiance of death. Even long after the custom

Society Helpless

had been abolished, there were some to be found who were no whit less in devotion to their ancestors who set the unhappy example. Sir Frederic Halliday found himself compelled to allow the performance of the rite when the lady, who sought his permission, allowed her finger to be burnt into cinder over a flame without the twitch of a muscle to prove her courage to meet the flames of the funeral pyre. Bernier, the French Doctor at the Mughal Court, had to threaten as a last resort the use of his influence with the Emperor to disinherit her children, when the widowed mother contrary to established custom would not swerve from her determination to burn with her husband's body. Even in these days, there are instances of widows committing suicide on the death of their husbands. Within the writer's own experience there have been two cases where wives, belonging, be it said, to a so-called low caste but educated, seeking the first opportunity to end their lives on the death of their husbands. In both cases the closest watch had been kept. In one case, the watch was so close that the lady felt it impossible to carry out her desire and pretended that she was reconciled to her widowhood. She joined with the rest of the household in conversation and indoor games, but as soon as she found the fears had subsided she asked leave to go to her parents' house. She went and before long poisoned herself. In the old days, widows must have been more determined, and the Brahmins must have given way in sheer helplessness. The

Lingering Instances

contact with Western culture had already produced a large number of people who favoured the abolition of *Sati*, among them Raja Ram Mohun Roy. The abolition by the Government of the rite was agreeable to the wishes of a very large part of the population.

We may now refer to one other institution of Dancing Girls attached to temples, which has provoked serious condemnation from Europeans as well as English educated Indians. At first sight, the presence of prostitutes in temple precincts among its functionaries appears unholy, but one has to understand the Hindu standpoint before passing judgment. Hindus have recognised prostitution as a necessary evil, and recognised it so to safeguard family life. To the Hindu, the prostitute is one who is doing a valuable service to society, and is treated as part and parcel of society, and not as one outside its pale. The prostitute had the privilege of dancing before the God, of heading the procession of Rajas and of accompanying invitation parties. She had, therefore, little occasion to feel as the prostitute of the West, that she was the victim of society, and develop hatred against it. Degrading as the calling was, she was made to feel that she had responsibilities towards society which she had to discharge, and with that feeling her humanity was preserved. Indeed, belonging to a special caste, she could not but feel that she was of society. Hence it happens that, in India, there are so many charitable institutions founded and endowed by

Social Recognition of the Dancing Girl

them such as choultries, water-reservoirs and schools. It was but a few years ago that a famous dancing girl endowed a prize in a 1st grade college.

How little their profession affected their general character may be realised from the following true story: A dancing girl took a fancy to a poor young man several years her junior, and had him as her lover. It is usual for the dancing girl to have a lover, her customers rarely succeeding to enter the inner circle of her affections. This particular young man was intelligent and enterprising, and his mistress advanced him money to help him to start a business. He throve in the business, and was before long a very rich man. The woman now past 45, of her own accord, and in spite of protests from her grateful lover, insisted on his marrying, cast about for a suitable match and finding one, had the ceremony performed. The newly wedded couple were put up in a house of their own, the dancing girl continuing to live in her own house not far off, but exercising a general supervision over the new household giving the young wife advice when needed, and generally acting as a mother to her. The couple are still living. Such instances are rare now, but they are rendered possible because the religion and moral life of the dancing girl, strange as it may seem to the West, were unaffected by her calling. It is such women that set the standard to the caste.

Her Moral Standard

Dancing girls of the old type were highly cultivated in the fine arts, especially dancing and

music. They had polished manners and were excellent conversationalists, and what is more important to society, they had the traditional knowledge in regard to venereal diseases, knew how to detect symptoms in themselves and in their customers. A caste by themselves, they freely admitted into it women who became outcastes from moral lapses, who found it impossible to live with their husbands from incompatibilities of temper or cruelty, or whose passions were inordinately high. Girls orphaned early in life and without support were adopted by them to be brought up, of course in their profession.

It will be seen that the system described above is very different from the commercialised vice of the large cities in which prostitutes, lost to all modesty and decency, do not hesitate to solicit in open streets, and attract man's attention by libidinous attitudes and nude displays. They are strangers to all sense of art or beauty, strangers to all cultivated tastes and refinements. They are addicted to gambling, cocaine, drink or opium, and know little else besides surrendering their body for unholy use by man. They live their days in a succession of excitements until, shorn of their good looks and diseased, they are cast into the streets by brothel keepers. They think nothing of luring girls and married women to their own ruin and degradation.

Contrasted with the West

Indian social reformers are more exercised over the Temple Dancing Girl than over the City Prostitute because the former is associated

with places of religious worship. Westernised themselves, they accept in full the criticism that vice should not be allowed to rear her ugly head before the very Gods. They forget that association of religion with temple prostitution prevents to no small extent the degradation that usually goes with it, and that it becomes more humanised than the unashamed prostitution of the city. God is in no danger, because of the proximity of a dancing girl. On the other hand, her office is robbed of a great deal of its degradation, and her presence prevents the wicked and vicious from bestowing their unwelcome attentions on respectable ladies and enables them to witness the festivals free from their molestations.

Ignorance of Social Reformers

The aid of the legislature, be it remembered too, is sought not to penalise the carnal wants of man, the primary evil, but against the woman who supplies them. Nor can any law, however drastic, prevent prostitution. It will drive it to the intricate recesses of narrow lanes where it will flourish carrying its infection into the neighbourhood. And the abolition of prostitution in temples would gradually debase it to the level of the city vice. It would be wiser if the methods of the West are not copied in India to abolish vice, for the standpoints of India and the West in regard to it, as has been seen, are different. Nor is the religious attitude the same. It is all right for the West to allow nothing else to intrude into the one compartment of thought to which religion is assigned. But in a society

where religion pervades all life and blends in all activities it would be difficult, and it would be foolish to keep it out of a particular activity however degrading. Liberty is the key-note of Western life, and yet, how many sins are committed in its name! They are ignored or tolerated lest its legitimate suppression in a few directions should affect its predominance in the man's outlook as a whole. So is religion in India. It pervades the whole field of life and colours its entire outlook. A hundred sins are committed in its name, but the Hindu tolerates them because a thousand things good are also done under its influence. But the reformer's ardour is such that he does not pause to reflect on these facts, and seeks to put on the statute-book provisions of law that do more harm than good. If he could but lay aside the prepossessions of his Western learning, he would rather initiate processes of refinement and cultivation that may save the dancing girl from the degrading habits of the brothel girl and make her a model for the latter to imitate, and thus humanise the institution. What is happening now is practically the reverse. The dancing girls are sinking to the level of the ordinary prostitute, their art forsaken, their religion abandoned, their traditional restraints and discrimination discarded, and they are not able to furnish to man anything more than the opportunity for his sinful indulgence.

Wrong Outlooks

Social reformers, if they wish to effect vital reforms in society, must concern themselves not

with the abolition of temple prostitution or the raising of marriageable ages of girls, but rather with giving women greater economic independence.

Economic Freedom Important

The primary need of women in India is the right to an equitable share in the property of her husband. The temptation to premature consummation and to procreate children at the earliest opportunity would then cease. She would receive more consideration. She will suffer less from the jealousies and squabbles of congested Joint families with insufficient incomes.

In these reforms through the legislature the conciliation of the orthodox is desirable, but should not be looked upon as a condition precedent. For every text in support of a reform, the orthodox can cite another in opposition. We have seen how law has changed in the course of of its long history of several millennia in response to different requirements, and it would not be difficult to oppose one text by another, both from authentic sources. The point to stress, therefore, is not so much that there is Sastraic support for any proposed reform, but that the prevalence in earlier times of the practice now sought to be reinforced did not bring any harm to Hindu civilisation. The orthodox cry out every time a reform is proposed or adopted that their religion and civilisation are in danger. So they cried when *Sati* was abolished ; so they have ever since, at every reform, however feeble in its effects. They fail to realise that a civilisation is not worth having, which has to be nursed by the

Orthodoxy

tears of the child wife and the desolation of the virgin widow.

Whenever Hindu culture was at its full vigour and showed its splendour and vitality, women had privileges, if not quite the same, at least almost nearly those of man. We need not pause to enquire which was cause and which effect. It would suffice for our purpose to show that they went together. If Hindus wish to rise to their full manhood, and if their civilisation is to attain its old vigour and splendour again, they should let their women rise to the full height of their womanhood.

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15. INDIAN ART

Western Lack of Understanding Natural—Art and Life—Sense of Beauty more widespread in India—Indian Art and Craft in Unison—Common Customs to conserve Art Sense—East and West—A Fundamental Difference—Consequent Incapacity of the West—Place of Realism—Objective and Subjective—Individualistic and Suggestive—Non-Social but more Enduring—Advantage of the Indian Artist—Growth of Symbolism—Reinforced by Social Necessity—Symbolism of Nataraja—Rigidity of Convention and Greater Liberty—The Need for Unity—Realism in Indian Art—Based on Broader Humanity—Exuberance and Extravagance—Exaggeration, Eastern and Western—Recent Imitation of the West—Beginnings of a Renaissance—Need for Balanced Outlooks.

A correct, if not a sympathetic, appreciation of Indian Art has been much more difficult for the West than an appreciation of Indian literature. Not many Europeans went to the length of Macaulay in his contemptuous reference to the literature of India. Indian art has repelled far many more Europeans as but the exhibition of the grotesque and bizarre. Until a few decades ago,

Western Lack of Understanding Natural

the number of Europeans that acknowledged Indian art as based on any sound canons, could be counted on one's fingers. The fact is not surprising, when one remembers that, even in the West, controversy has raged between different schools there and the march of time has effected revolutions in taste and opinions. A Ruskin was required to disclose the genius of a Turner to an undiscerning public; and the portrait of his mother by Whistler, which Ruskin described as "a pot of paint hurled at the head of the public" for which Whistler was awarded the contemptuous damage of a penny, was broadcasted a couple of generations later by the British Government as an advertisement to secure recruits for the Great War. If the development of a new line, with fundamental ideas the same, among Western painters themselves has had to face the fire of such criticism, it is not astonishing that Indian art, with a wholly different set of canons and elaborate and wholly unfamiliar conventions, should have found no appeal in the West and have drawn upon it its unmitigated contempt. And strange to say, no other than Ruskin himself, the genius among art critics of 19th-century England, set the fashion. He talked such a lot of nonsense about Indian art, but in such splendid style that those who were fascinated by the style accepted without question the nonsense. He delivers himself thus on Indian art :

It is quite true that the art of India is delicate and refined. But it has one curious character, distinguishing it from all other arts of equal merit in design; *it never represents a natural fact.* It either forms its compositions out of meaningless fragments of colour and flowings of line; or if it represents any living creature, it represents that creature under some distorted and monstrous form. To all the facts and forms of nature it wilfully and resolutely opposes itself, it will not draw a man but an eight-armed monster; it will not draw a flower, but only a spiral or a zigzag.

The people, who practise it, are cut off from all possible sources of healthy knowledge or natural delight; that they have wilfully sealed up and put aside the entire volume of the World, and have got nothing to read, nothing to dwell upon, but that imagination of the thoughts of their hearts, of which we are told that "it is evil continually". Over the whole spectacle of creation they have thrown a veil in which there is no rent. For them no star peeps through the blanket of the dark, for them neither their heaven shines nor their mountains rise, for them the flowers do not blossom, for them the creatures of field and forest do not live. They lie bound in the dungeon of their own corruption, encompassed only by doleful phantoms or by spectral vacancy.

Speaking of Indian models for designs, he says:

There are, I suppose, none in their kind more admirable than the decorated works of India. They are, indeed, in all materials capable of colour, wool, marble or metal, almost inimitable in their delicate application of divided hue and fine arrangement of fantastic line. Nor is this power of theirs exerted by the people rarely or without enjoyment; the love of subtle design seems universal in the race and is developed in every implement that they shape and every building that they raise. And yet out of it come treachery, cruelty, cowardice, idolatry, bestiality—whatever is fruitful in the work of hell.

This literally is the realist gone mad.

It is difficult for Europeans and, for that matter, even Westernised Indians, to understand Indian art. As Sir George Birdwood has said:—

The intimate absorption of Hindu life in the unseen realities of man's consciousness is seldom sufficiently acknowledged

by Europeans, and indeed, cannot be fully comprehended by men whose belief in the supernatural has been destroyed by the prevailing material ideas of modern society. Every thought, word and deed of the Hindu belongs to the world of the Unseen as well as of the Seen. Nothing shows this more strikingly than the traditionary arts of India. Everything that is made is for direct religious use, or has some religious significance; the material of which different articles are made, their weight and the colours in which they are painted, are fixed by a religious rule. An obscurer symbolism than of material and colours is to be traced also in the forms of things even for the ministry of domestic use. Every detail of Indian decoration, Aryan or Turanian, has a religious meaning and the arts of India can never be understood until there are brought to their study, not only the sensibility which can appreciate them at first sight, but a familiar acquaintance with the character and aspects of the religious poetry, national legends and mythological scriptures, that have always been the inspiration and of which they are the perfected imagery.

Western critics of Indian art can seldom lay claim to these qualifications, and are handicapped by the further and more serious drawback of an almost universal narrowness of view in regard to art canons and ideals, which are not of their own land. An examination of Indian art has, however, to be made; for art reflects the physical and mental life of the people and is built upon their immediate instincts and needs; and Indian art, before its degradation by Western influences, had its appeal not only to the æsthetic side of the people, but was designed and developed to shed its influence on every department of Indian life. Even now the traditionary arts of India visualise truths and ideals, on which the Indian loves to dwell. In therefore expounding the principles of Hindu civilisation, an examination of Indian art is necessary to see how

Art and Life

far its features may be traced in the art that has been cultivated for no less than 20 centuries, and still remains as a tradition among a large section of the population.

One striking feature of India is, as compared with the West, a more universal worship of beauty. It is not confined to the wealthy and the educated, but extends far beyond the narrow circle to classes which are not over-endowed with worldly goods. For the most part rural, the common people have not had to cut themselves off from nature. Indoor-life is irksome under the heat of the tropical sun. During most part of the year and for a considerable portion of the day, the people are out of their houses. The beauties of the morning and evening skies, the glories of the moon, the magic of her mantle, the songs of birds, crops in their delicate shades of green and yellow, rivers, pools and groves, are daily delights that surround them. With flowers and fruits they worship their gods. With them, they decorate them. On auspicious days, they decorate door lintels with green leaves. Their formal gift to visitors consists of flowers or fruits or both. The villagers' forum is the shade of the margosa or the ficus. They are thus in constant touch with nature.

Sense of Beauty more widespread in India

Furthermore, art and craft go together and are in intimate union. The gold, iron and silversmiths, the carpenter, the weaver and the carpet-maker employ art forms and formulæ to render their ware beautiful. The pattern

carved, embossed, engraved or woven have more or less a religious significance. We may still see a God or Goddess or a scene from the Ramayana or Mahabharata carved on a door lintel, or on a gold bangle. The artistry of these in daily use is beneficial to the user as well as the craftsman who made them with his own hand, assisted by only a few crude instruments. The union of art and craft in the professions of hereditary castes gives to Indian art its vitality and preserves even now the artistic instincts of the people as a whole.

Indian Art and Craft in Unison

To add to these influences, there are a large number of customs which require the womenfolk to develop their artistic sense. The beautiful and intricate patterns which the housewife has to make in white powder before the front door of her house—the first thing in the morning—patterns, executed with marvellous ease, have no small share in developing and preserving the artistic sense. During *Dasara* and *Deepavali*, they make many a beautiful specimen of art in silk, lace or bead, to add to the displays on those occasions. They paint scenes from the classics on walls in beautiful colours, and these are usually done so well that it would be hard to believe that the fair hands which drew them have had no course in drawing.

Common Customs to Conserve Art-Sense

The gradual though incomplete change to a more comprehensive view of art on the part of Europeans is a remarkable achievement for the West. Absorbed in the problems of the material

world, finding in life an end in itself and not the means to an end, active, eager and confident, it is material beauty that the West seeks to dwell on and delights in, the more so because a great part of its environment is of human creation, and therefore artificial. The West is so disappointed with a world so contrary that it tries to reconstruct a world after its own heart. The East has no illusions about worldly beauty, and would not have it because it is transient and would tend to forge one more link to the chain of attachment to worldly existence. What is fundamental to Western art is the passion for life and the consequent desire to make the best and most of it. Life is lived but once on this earth. Once death overtakes it, there is no return. There is, therefore, after the joys of life a more vigorous pursuit than when existence is believed to be continued over a succession of lives and death is no longer a final and everlasting oblivion. The man threatened with the loss of eyesight lingers over each delight of the eye, over each detail of colour and form, so that he may call it back to memory in its perfection when vision fails him. Not so the man who is in no fear of that dreadful calamity. No longing lingering looks for him. This analogy will help in some measure to understand the differences between Eastern and Western temperaments, one on the alert for what there is of joy in this life, no matter how fleeting, the

East and West—A Fundamental Difference

other leaving these aside for what is more enduring, one objective and realistic, the other subjective and idealistic.

The West is, therefore, unable to appreciate art which neglects the charms of this World as common, familiar or even delusive, and which strives to catch and retain glimpses of the unseen. Indian art has been created and developed for spiritual vision, and to attain that ideal in Indian music, sculpture and painting, suggestions of the infinite and permanent have not been weakened by association of the finite and impermanent. The West looks for fidelity to nature and is disappointed to find that fidelity has been sacrificed deliberately in the endeavour to realise a higher purpose which the West cannot understand or appreciate. It wants to look at nature, but is invited to look beyond nature. It seeks communion with the spirit of nature, but is offered communion with the soul. Nor is there, in the pose of Indian statuary or images, any suggestion of familiar human activity such as would recall experiences and associations of the World, which have to be cast aside in regions of the spirit; anatomical detail and accuracy are not necessary for the spiritual life that the Indian artists strove to exhibit. The artist is enjoined to concentrate his mind on the idea, and visualises it rather than draw from a model. The realism of the West does not therefore find a place in Indian art, indeed could not satisfy a people who looked upon phenomenal existence as illusory and sought the

Consequent Incapacity of the West

thing in itself, apart from the categories of time and space.

Western art placed before the people definite tangible ideals for realisation. When the Greek artists drew their Gods from the athletes of the *Gymnasia*, they set forth ideals of form and strength which could be realised in actual life, which, if it brought Gods down to the level of men, at the same time, made it possible for men to realise the perfection of Gods. The sculpture and painting of the West serve the purpose of revealing beauties of life, and tend to make the links of attachment to the World more numerous and stronger, though more refined. In the East, ideals increased the depth of spiritual vision and the longing for a spiritual world. The songs, pictures and statuary are rather spiritual exercises towards the attainment of ideals which are best realised by detachment from the World, and which charm men away from the sensuous and impermanent to an undiscovered something. They wax eloquent over the joys and enthusiasm not of this world, but of another where there is neither beauty nor ugliness, neither joy nor sorrow, nor pain nor pleasure. The realism of the West rendered the ideal of beauty necessarily objective and led to the concomitant dualism of beauty and ugliness. To a people who sought spiritual perfection, so narrow a conception of beauty was out of the question. Indeed those who do not accept the dualism of good and evil, could not accept what is its corollary, the dualism

Place of Realism

of beauty and ugliness. To the Indian the object is ugly, because the mind is at fault and has not been sufficiently trained in understanding. The Indian ideal of beauty is subjective. Which is the correct view, whether of the West or of India, it is not the purpose here to decide; perhaps truth lies midway, but the warning that what does not appeal as beautiful does so because the mind is defective, lays on the individual the responsibility and not on the object, as the alternative conception of the West does. It is clear that the individualistic ideal demands that things shall not be viewed in the highly refractive atmosphere of self-interest.

Objective and Subjective

The ideal of beauty being subjective, it necessarily follows that it is individualistic, because a subjective standard is difficult to define. It depends again on individual appreciation, for external criteria are not forthcoming, or are set forth with difficulty. If Indian artists are not tied to the form, they do not allow the domination of the idea to degenerate into a tyranny. They set forth the idea fully where it had to be done, with the aid of symbolism, and where any equivocation is fatal to the message. But where imagination and fancy may come in, freest play is allowed to them. The lion is shown asleep and, fierce even then, the imagination is left to picture what it would look when awake. The lion rampant of the Western artist, however well drawn, depicts in full detail a particular mood, which the spectator

Individualistic and Suggestive

may or may not appreciate and leaves his imagination no scope. *Sita* in *Asokavana* is depicted with her head drooping. The Western artist would have had the face fully directed towards the spectator. 'Companions on the road' of Surendra Nath Kar have their backs turned on the spectator, whose imagination, not having the faces to contemplate, dwells on the journey together and the hardships and the privations to be faced together. Where imagination has to be helped, a few deft strokes are all that may be given, and the Indian artists' mastery of the line is so perfect that they suffice. Silence is more eloquent at times than speech. A nudge or wink at the right time conveys a message more effectively than a long string of words. In the field of art, similar methods may be employed quite as effectively.

It need hardly be said that, in these cases, the appreciation will vary with the power of imagination of the individual. The idea has no set form, but is elastic enough to suit the need of the less developed as well as the requirements of the highly cultivated imagination. Art expresses either directly or with the aid of suggestion and imagination. That art is best which does not tie the mind to the form bodied forth. The art which helps the individual to express in his own way is more vital in its effects than the art which seeks acceptance of the idea as expressed by the artist. It is true there is less chance for the comradeship of a common impulse, and therefore

Non-Social but more Enduring

loss of the social element. On the other hand, the effect of a common level of feeling is transient. What has helped the individual to draw on his own fancy or imagination in his own way is more enduring.

Individualism in art was furthered in a different way too. Indian artists, being members of a caste or castes, were not subject to the temptation of an appeal to the multitude. Under the limited compètition of Hindu Society, artists had never occasion to seek apprecia-

Advantage of the Indian Artist

tion by descent from high artistic levels to the level of the popular demand. His place was assured to him in the community and was free from the degrading influence of unregulated competition, which tends to ruin artistic ideals and excellences. The appeal of Indian art has therefore been always to the individual rather than the crowd. There could not therefore arise the social element incidental to art such as that of the West, which has definite tangible external standards more easily ascertained, and has appeals to emotions which are commonly understood.

The pace of the crowd is limited by the pace of the slowest individual in it. The individual can regulate his pace according to his own strength, and as he feels inclined. The appeal to the individual therefore enables the artist to take him further into regions of the spirit than Western art can. But things of the spirit are not easily displayed in art. Divinity may be marked off by an aureola, and it is

worthy of note that Western art for all its realism could not dispense with that symbol for Christ or Mary. Where it is tempted further to display contemplative life or other attributes of divinity, the difficulty is very much greater. The realism could not help there at all. Indian art carefully portrays the contemplative mood by the half closed eye and half submerged pupil,—what ignorant Europeans have called a squint. But the divine attribute cannot be indicated by any appurtenances of mere man. The Western artists tried them in the West and they failed. Even Raphael's God has nothing in the figure suggestive of God, but everything suggestive of man. The Indian discarded human attributes, and eager to satisfy the requirements of contemplative life, and not only to seek a form Divine but to give it the attribute associated with divinity, was compelled to resort to a more elaborate symbolism. The conception of cosmic phenomena, in which there are involved forces of creation, preservation and destruction as in the rhythmic dance of God Siva, involves the use of every symbol, appropriate to those forces, arranged in artistic synthesis. The Western artist, as for example Botticelli, would have perhaps personified each of those forces, and then made the dance of a group rather than of one. He would have succeeded, but the solution precluded the vital underlying idea that the forces are essentially one and proceed from one source. The Indian artist's

Growth of Symbolism

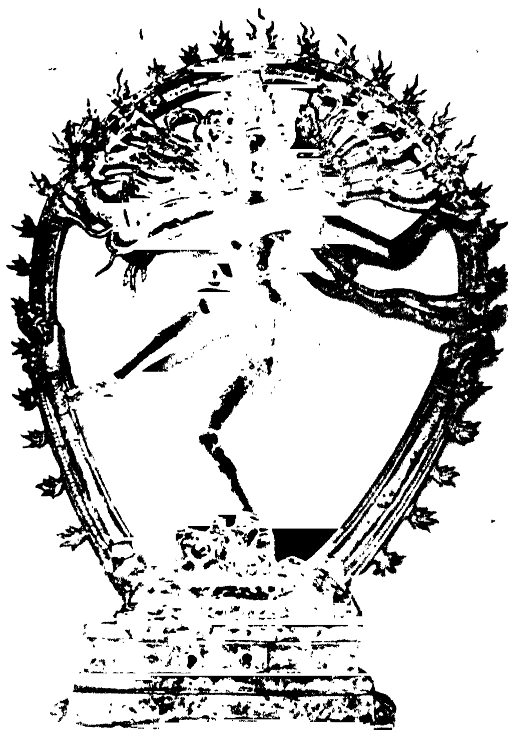
conception of it, as the dance of God himself, preserves the unitary character of all the forces and keeps them in due subordination to one another, but at the same time is compelled to endow the God with many hands, one for each of his many attributes, placing in each hand a symbol of one of the forces conceived. To the realistic school the presence of many hands in the figure presents a difficulty in appreciation, not easily got over.

The elaborateness or even the subtlety of the symbolism may be traced to the comprehensiveness of the ideal which formed the subject-matter of the Indian contemplation. Symbolism was inevitable for a different reason too. The policy of admitting into the Aryan fold communities of cruder religious beliefs than their own involved tolerance, if not the acceptance, of the multitudes of gods and goddesses, some of them with horrifying attributes, and their admission into the Hindu pantheon. A process of sublimation was necessary under which they were made vehicles of ideals that fitted in with the essentials of the more elevating of Aryan doctrines. The dancing Siva, for evample, may have been a God from the overcrowded pantheon of the aboriginal classes, but nevertheless now symbolises a difficult but sublime philosophy.

Reinforced by Social Necessity

The whole figure represents the cosmic dance. The hand with the palm facing the spectator bids him not to fear. The one carrying fire symbolises the destructive forces of nature, the one holding

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THE DANCE OF SHIVA

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ELEPHANTS IN AJANTA CEILING

the drum is suggestive of rhythm. The uplifted foot with the hand that points to it bids him seek its protection. The prostrate form beneath the right foot is the self in man suppressed. The male ear-ring in one ear and the female ear-ring in the other indicates the perfect union of *Purusha* and *Prakriti*. The five phases in cosmos, *viz.*, creation, preservation, destruction, illusion and salvation are thus represented by the single figure.

Symbolism of Nataraja

The symbolism that helps Indian art to deliver messages so complex has to be governed by uniform and easily intelligible formulæ. The symbol of the heart in Western art does not vary except in insignificant details. So, too, postures and signs, used for different moods and attitudes, have to be the same throughout to prevent confusion and to facilitate interpretation. The invitation to seek the feet for the worship of the deity, for example, could not be shown in more ways than one without the risk of the spectator failing to interpret the attitude. That an art using many symbols must have sets of rules and regulations from which departure is forbidden, is a necessary consequence. In music, architecture and painting, formulæ have to be fixed within which artists have to find means for individual expression. The *ragas* have remained the same for centuries and the *silpasastras* imposed the heaviest penalties for transgressing the elaborate rules which they laid down for image

Rigidity of Convention and

making. It may seem at first sight that they involved considerable sacrifice of originality and inventiveness on the part of the artist. But it is to be remembered that the artist was enjoined to concentrate on the idea itself to realise the form to be given to it. That is almost a limitless freedom compared to the insistence of faithfulness to form laid on the Western artist. The Indian artist is permitted to take liberties with the form to preserve and emphasise the idea.

Greater Liberty

His Western brother is so tied to details of form that he seldom realises the idea. To realise the freedom of the Indian artist in spite of the detailed rules laid down for his art, one may look for sculptural figures of the *Dwarapalas* (temple guards) that are to be found at the main door of every Hindu temple of south India. The only features to which the artist is tied down are the prolonged canines and the mace. All of them display very great vigilance, but it would be difficult to find two pairs in the same pose. The most astonishing variety of postures may be seen, but not one in which vigilance, appropriate to their office, is sacrificed. In Western countries the pose would have been most likely the same, perhaps that of the soldier on guard duty.

Symbolism has been given as a reason for such stereotyping of form and posture as there is in Indian art. That is but one reason. Perhaps the more important feature is the danger of the divergent racial elements among Hindus setting up different art canons and thus impeding the

diffusion of Aryan civilisation. Whether in literature, art or religion, the more diverse the racial elements that have to be brought under its influence, the more rigid and numerous the forms and formulae. In spite of the Greeco-Roman ideal in Western art, numerous have been the schools of Western art: French, Flemish, Romanic and Spanish, to mention but a few. Far more numerous would have been the schools of Indian art had Aryan canons been more accommodating and conciliatory, and the ideal of a homogeneity of thought and feeling underlying Indian civilisation would have been never realised at all. The schools of Bengal, Rajput and Mughal there are, but they are eloquently Indian, though the races that developed them had far less in common than the races which developed the various schools of Western painting.

The Need for Unity

The criticism of the West, that Indian art is an exhibition of the bizarre and the grotesque, rests on no more substantial foundation than the inability to penetrate its symbolism. This is evident from the full appreciation of the truthfulness and feeling with which Indian artists have portrayed animal life, for the views are mutually inconsistent. The artist, who would take pardonable liberties with human form, is not likely to be generous and faithful in regard to animal form. Yet nothing would exceed the perfection of the rendering of the elephant or the monkey by Indian artists. They did not delight as Western artists did in dwelling on the fierceness

of wild animals, which therefore repels the spectator, or makes him apprehensive or defiant.

Realism in Indian Art

They rather portray them in their gentler and more playful moods which dispose man to sympathy and kindliness. The humour of the monkey is a favourite theme. The lion is shown rather asleep than rampant. What he may look like when awakened is left to the imagination. Ducks are shown preening their feathers or resting on one leg with the head concealed beneath the wing, or a group of them are portrayed floating on the waters or taking flight and floating away at sudden intrusion. Take the panels showing elephants in the ceiling of Ajanta caves. How delightfully humourous each one of them is! Before one saw them, one would have found it hard to believe that the form of so ponderous a pachyderm could lend itself to attitudes so playful and humorous.

Love of animals displayed in these paintings and sculptures is sufficient evidence of the broad humanity of Indian civilisation which knows no country, caste or creed. The domestic walls are usually strongest along the border lines of the family. They give strength and purpose to the dividing lines further outwards in the circles of human relationships. When they are not erected at all, or are feeble under the Joint family, the whole set of encircling lines which keep man from man, and man from animals, lose correspondingly in their significance and purpose. Love and affection,

Based on Broader Humanity

the finer and stronger they are, the wider is their range. Love and affection limited to the family is found too often to stop short of that difficult frontier of the self.

The pure and undefiled expression in their fullness of emotions, which the Indian artist seeks, leads to profusion and detail in decorative art in which the central theme may seem to be lost. A more intellectual art like that of the West, which seeks inspiration from the external, at any rate accepts it as guide, is necessarily subject to the limitation this imposes. The idea which the artist seeks to body forth is usually fugitive, not easily perceived by all, and to make it more obvious, he is committed to a little artistic exaggeration, and you may not allow any profusion of detail in which the theme may be lost or become obscure. Indeed, he deliberately chooses his background to give fuller expression to the idea he has in mind. The artist, on the other hand, whose inspiration is from the idea or emotion itself and concentrates on it, gets it in such intensity that details, however numerous or refractory, may not encumber or obscure expression. Nor is there an external standard to a theme which is so subjective. That is perhaps the reason why decorative art in India is usually so extravagant in detail.

Exuberance and Extravagance

Exaggerations are inevitable when feelings have to be unburdened. What is sought there is not so much sympathy as relief. The depth of feeling determines the intensity of the outburst. Who

would blame the husband for exaggeration, who complains to his wife absent for a couple of weeks that she has been away for ages? Indeed, without that pardonable exaggeration would he have expressed what was in his heart? Among a people whose institutions demand the cult of the emotion, there are occasions when it is liable to run to excess. And nowhere will there be so many occasions as in the field of art. It is the idea, with all its emotional content fully charged by concentration, for which full expression is sought, and sought too with a determination that no limitations of accepted forms shall stand in the way of full expression. Even the Westerner, so particular as regards form, does not question the twists and turns of words emotion gives to them in music. They are restrained and they yield to the pressure. But come to more resistant media as sculpture or painting, he insists on a scrupulous adherence to form. The standpoint is illogical. If emotion may override form in a plastic material, why should it not have the same privilege in these more resistant? After all what matters is the idea itself, not the approach to it. The song from the beggar in the street in rags may have a greater appeal than the same from a prima donna in the elaborate setting of a stage. We find too, in the West where will is set above emotion, a parallel exaggeration in tensions developed to the highest pitch and sustained until the very last moment, when all the events, appallingly contrary and threatening

Exaggeration, Eastern and Western

to set at nought everything, fail to happen and the situation is saved. There is in these a trial of the will which has no parallel in any combination of circumstances in actual life. It is a weakness very human to carry to excess a love or a passion.

Having dealt with such features of Indian art which reflect the governing principles of Indian civilisation, we may now trace the influences on it of the West. Indian art has been influenced by Grecian and later by Persian art, but neither of them had, however clearly their influences may be traced, succeeded in destroying its distinct identity or in the modification of its canons. That a school should have sprung up in India, which practically repudiated the principles of Indian art and surrendered to Western art, may therefore seem all the more surprising. The wide popularity of the pictures of Ravi Varma, however, show how far the educated classes in India have had their education isolated from the main currents of Indian thought and feeling, and remain wholly ignorant of the artistic traditions of the country. In the portraiture and delineation of the Indian heroes and heroines, especially the latter in their charming drapery, the incongruity of Ravi Varma's art is not obvious, but when he goes beyond to illustrate incidents or stories the effect is almost ludicrous and stamps his art as Eurasian. One has but to compare his pictures illustrating *Kaliya Mardana* (the dance of Krishna on the Snake God) with the treatment of the

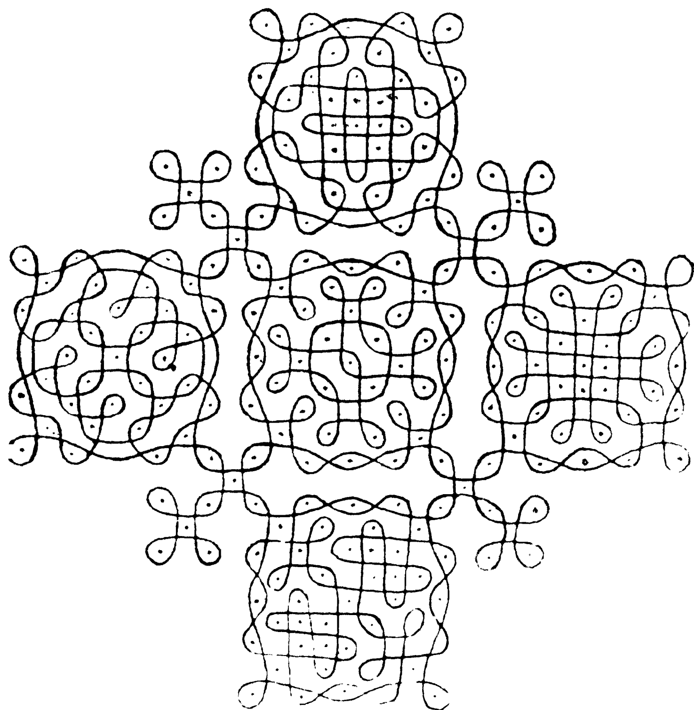
Recent Imitation of the West

same subject as shown in one of the South Indian Bronzes to reveal the world of difference between Eastern and Western art, and the futility of imitation of one by the other. Ravi Varma's *Lakshmi* is another of his pictures which proclaim the folly of adapting the principles of Western art to circumstances and conditions which are alien to them. Lakshmi is heavy in body and in pose, but is shown standing on a lotus whose stem is hardly as thick as her little finger, but shows no indication of the weight it supports. Compare one of the pictures of Buddha in Ajanta caves with his feet resting on a lotus flower. The petal is shown as yielding beneath the toe. Apart from that, *Lakshmi* is a grace, an uncertain Goddess, and a heavy pose is the last one an artist should adopt for a Goddess, so fickle, so elusive and uncertain.

That, in spite of defects so serious as these, the art of Ravi Varma has so wide an appeal among the educated Indians shows how far Indian art has lost its hold on them. The education they have received has practically destroyed their ability to appreciate it. They are not perhaps to blame, but the fact remains that they feel more attracted to Western art than to that of their own country. An educated Maharaja or Zamindar builds his palace on a Swedish or Italian model, and fills his drawing-room with the tinsel of the West. The true specimens of Indian art are neglected, and the Indian crafts-man under the neglect is forgetting his art.



KALIYAMARDANA OF RAVI VARMA



SOUTH INDIAN DRAWING

Nevertheless, there is still artistic tradition in the country that may yet be revived and strengthened. The revival of Indian art in Calcutta is a sign of the awakening national consciousness. It owes its existence to the enthusiasm of Havell, his sympathy and initiative. A large circle of Indians have set about reviving Indian art, but it is yet far from enlisting the sympathy of the intelligentsia on its side. It is indeed to be doubted whether the artists themselves have succeeded in expressing more than a discontent. A great number of productions fail in the supreme criterion of all art, the emotional experience of the artist himself. They have not succeeded in uniting the past with the present, in so enlarging and moulding the old art formulæ that past ideals are reconciled with present aspirations. They are more concerned with the memory of the past than the struggles of the present. It is a great thing to have proceeded so far in a renaissance of Indian art amidst the indifferences and apathy of the bulk of the Europeans and educated Indians, and to have rejected art principles of Western art as unsuited to the spirit and genius of India. But it has to go much further. Except for indifferent Mother Indias, national aspirations have failed to furnish themes for the artist. The desolation of the virgin widow, or the motherhood of the girl wife or the degraded untouchable have not yet touched his heart.

Beginnings of a Renaissance

The artistic traditions of the country came down to us from times when the country was under indigenous rule. The artists of those days could and did well to occupy themselves with things spiritual, because the people were liable to hold fast to things material as well. The country was theirs, prosperity was theirs. These have long ceased to be theirs now, and it is foolish to let the old traditions interfere with modern artistic requirements so far that the present is forgotten in the contemplation of the past.

Need for Balanced Outlooks

The other-worldliness of the Indian artists of old was cultivated as a corrective to the worldliness which wealth and prosperity was bound to foster, and then spirituality was a discipline. What value could there be in other-worldliness when life is so divested of joy that worldliness is well-nigh impossible, and what value could there be in the spirituality that is sought merely as a consolation? We may gain the whole world and lose the soul. We may lose the world and still lose the soul. The joys of life have to be restored to the Indians to render possible the true joys of the spirit, and the Indian artists' primary concern, for many years to come, ought to be with the first rather than the second, and in that development, more consonant with present-day requirements, Western art may furnish many a useful lesson.

16. OVER-GOVERNMENT

Popular Freedom in the Past, with Status Assured—Character of British Consolidation—Decay of Corporate Rural Life—Intricacy and Helplessness—Exactions and Tyranny—A Blunder of the First Magnitude—Need of Debasement and Unmoral Law—Mechanical Efficiency, in Effect Over-Government—Failure of Recent Measures—The Panchayat Acts—Local Boards—Legislatures—Even Officials Affected.

IT will now have become obvious to the reader that an important feature of the political and social organisation in India was the freedom from interference of the Government in the ordinary life of the people. This is perhaps true in the earlier stages of evolution of all communities not organised on a militaristic basis. Whether it is so or not, the communal organisation made it inevitable in India. The village and caste *panchayat* had, under their purview, almost the whole field of social life, and had no small share in the maintenance of peace and order. What was left to the king was practically the maintenance of peace and order, a task, as has been seen, of such formidable complexity in India, that he had time for little else. The main source of revenue

Popular Freedom in the Past

being a customary share in the grain heap on the threshing floor, it did not press so hard on the people as taxes fixed by law and paid in cash. Furthermore, the demand was on the village as a whole, and not individually on the cultivators. Even in regard to minor crimes, the *panchayats* had a jurisdiction, and detection of petty thefts was the duty of the village policemen under the control of the villagers. The king and his officers had therefore little to do with them, except on the occasion of assessment and collection of revenue.

We might call a polity of this description by whatever name we choose, primitive, antediluvian or semi-civilised, but the fact would remain that the power of the ruler was rarely felt in matters which are the primary concern of the individual and the community, except in regard to taxation where, however, the joint responsibility of the village mitigated the rigours of its incidence, as much by its equitable distribution among the villagers as by the effect of joint representation. That under an organisation of this simplicity the political instinct of the citizen would remain rudimentary may be conceded. But what is after all political instinct in the West but the rebound of humanity there from unendurable repression, and the reassertion of its right to live above the level of the brute?

With Status Assured

There was no individual in India, however poor and humble, but had a place in the Indian scheme of life, where he felt an equal with the fellows of his caste, and

with them had a corner in society all to themselves, permitted to manage their affairs in their own way. Indian polity was much like the *gopurams* or towers of Indian temples which consist of and are supported by many small towers.

British administration ignored these features of Indian polity. Political consolidation, as they knew it in the West, was to do away with local autonomy, economic, social and religious which the people enjoyed, and draw these various threads of power into the hands of the ruler. Long after it was achieved by these means and the essentials for the maintenance of security were assured, did the people win back local self-Government and freedom from interference in social and religious matters. The adoption of the same policy of consolidation in India was limited by considerations of religious neutrality forced on the British Government both by the multiplicity of creeds and communities, and by its own alien character. The neutrality was, however, purely political, and did not proceed from any recognition of the worth and value of the institutions and customs. It did not, therefore, hesitate to suppress features which it thought were barbarous or ugly, at the same time doing nothing to assist or initiate processes of reform that would prevent these manifestations. Negative reforms of this description resulted in irritation and demoralisation, rather than progress.

Character of British Consolidation

It was bad enough. What was worse was to draw the Indian from his communal shelters into

the open, and leave him to himself defenceless, half dazed and blinded by the blaze of light there. The dissolution of the communal life brought the individual, wholly unprepared and defenceless, face to face with the Government and its officers pursuing methods and following principles which were beyond his comprehension. The *ryotwari* system cut into the corporate life of the village, made each *pattadar* independent of others in the village and drew him in abject dependence to the central Government. He did not understand the complications of Revenue Law and Survey Rules. His grievances have to be heard by authorities through vakils who have to be paid heavy fees, and decisions are given perhaps in accordance with law, but many of them not in keeping with the best opinion of the village on the subject. The requirements of the Evidence Act have to be met by subterfuges, some of them costly and most of them demoralising. The assembly of the village was not recognised, and the immemorial rights of the servants of the village have been ignored. That they owe their services to the villagers has been disputed. The headman of the village, once elected by the villagers, is now a servant of the Government. In place of the village police, others have been introduced, invested with considerable powers which they often exercise to the humiliation of the ryot and which they often threaten to exceed, unless the ryot submits to his exactions. So with other

Decay of Corporate Rural Life

petty officials, who take advantage of the ignorance and helplessness of the ryot in exacting fees for services which Government have intended to be free, in levying *mamools* against threatened entanglements in the meshes of revenue and criminal laws. In the administration of justice, a complex procedure has been allowed to grow up which has delayed trials, and increased the dependence of the litigants on lawyers, and the litigious habit itself has grown enormously under the stress of a premature individualism and the decay of communal institutions. Each department created has added only fresh swarms of official flies to buzz round and worry the existence of the helpless villager.

Intricacy and Helplessness

The British reader has to recall the features of the present day income-tax to understand how far the intricacies of the Land Revenue and Land Surveys are beyond the understanding of the ordinary Indian ryot, and, even then, not before he has realised the ignorance and illiteracy of the ryot. Indeed, if the proceedings of the Boards of Revenue are waded through, one cannot escape the conviction that the District and Taluk officers themselves frequently blundered in the interpretation of the innumerable rules and regulations. In the village, the only man who has a knowledge of the code is the village accountant, but he knows it so well that he can hoodwink the ryot and, not unoften, the Revenue Officer as well.

To add to the burden and vexation of the ryot, there were other ways as well of harassing

the villagers. A volume could be written on the services which villagers are compelled to render to Government officers. Their carts may be imprest for use by them, and there is no escape, once the peon of the Tahsildar or the servant of the travellers' bungalow has fixed on one, unless some consideration is paid for release from the obligation. The supplies to touring officers are usually obtained free from ryots by underlings and very much in excess of actual requirements, and what is left over is shared between the officials to compensate them in some measure for the customary presents given in cash to the clerks and peons of the inspecting officer.

Exactions and Tyranny

As long as the people were well to do, these exactions were submitted to without murmur. The articles required had no ready market value in the village. It was in keeping with the proverbial hospitality of the village to see that visitors of distinction to the village were provided with all convenience. But the poverty of the people is so widespread that what was parted with as a superfluity is now surrendered much against their will and consequently helps only to deepen the dislike of the villagers against the Sirkar and its officers.

In view of the helplessness and ignorance of the villagers, the wisest course would have been to continue to consider the village as a unit, and respect and perfect the corporate life of the villagers and make them jointly responsible for the collection of the various classes of

revenue and for the maintenance of peace and order. It was not impossible to devise a system in which the village played a useful and wholesome part. It would have enormously simplified the administration, reduced considerably the high cost of Revenue collection, and the village folk, now looking upon themselves as helpless victims, would have felt themselves part and parcel of the administration, and would have played a part wholesome to their self-respect and invigorating to their personality.

A Blunder of the First Magnitude

British individualism stifled Indian communalism. The result was inevitable. A tax gathering empire organised the administration only with reference to the efficient collection of taxes, and its own security. Further than the requirements of these objectives, the normal life of the people was not affected. But capitalistic Imperialism has to penetrate much further into society, and send its tentacles into almost every nutritive cell of the organism to draw its nourishment, and modify and adapt its function to its varied and complex processes. New facilities in law, administration and justice have to be created to meet the requirements of the capitalistic enterprises and not of the people who, for the most part rural, communal and illiterate, are far from utilising them to their own advantage. Law too far ahead of the requirements of the organic growth of society, tends to demoralise the people; for law is far more than a convenience a discipline,

Need of Debasement and

Unmoral Law

and is an expression of social progress. When society does not progress but is stationary, laws too far ahead of it are sought for their convenience, and are submitted to to avoid the penalties of their violation. In either case, moral sanctions are not operative, and the adjustment is at the sacrifice of familiar disciplines and to the prejudice of new ones.

Apart from the divergence, if not the conflict, between legal and moral sanctions, there was the added irritation of their strict enforcement. It is not perhaps over-Government, but in effect it is felt as such. In any case, there cannot be two opinions with regard to the usurpation by the bureaucracy of the field of Local Self-Government. That was the one field which, from time immemorial, has been in the hands of the people, and it should have continued to be so, as much to preserve the ancient tradition as to leave to the people the field where they could feel to a certain degree they were their own masters, and cultivate and perfect their civic sense. There was the more reason for doing so, because of the mechanical efficiency of every other sphere of administration. It would have been some compensation for the demoralisations arising from the exacting requirements of a complex administration. But the Indian bureaucracy derives its sanctions from above, and not below from the people. It is a machinery ever growing in complexity, and its

Mechanical Efficiency, in Effect, Over-Government

products bear the stamp of the machine. It proliferates department after department, and it does not stop until every sphere of administration is held in the coils of its red tape. Efficiency is its only virtue, and it is maintained at a cost to human personality which cannot be reckoned in money. It has multiplied to many departments like so many aerial roots of the banian which descend in their multitude from the branches of the tree, but hardly any of which reach far down to the ground to establish live contacts with the soil.

It is small wonder if the village Government appeared semi-barbarous and uncivilised, and was swept away as a relic of the past, and its functions taken over. There might have resulted a better administration at the hands of the officers of the Government, if there had been no such supersession; the effect of which, however, was that the civic sense atrophied. Had the generous measure of Local Self-Government which Lord Ripon adumbrated been put into force, there would have been local bodies functioning usefully and effectively. But the bureaucracy set its face against it. It is only within recent years that there has been a fairly substantial advance, but it has not been sufficient to release from official pressure and influence the bodies set up, and conceived on lines too far ahead of the popular needs and requirements.

Failure of Recent Measures

The Panchayat Acts especially have so far failed to develop either moral responsibility or

civic sense. The local revenue authorities and village accountants are still the driving forces behind them. The Tahsildar is still too autocratic to follow constitutional lines of procedure, and the village accountant, a subservient tool in his hands, dresses up what really are his fiats, with the accoutrement and paraphernalia of Panchayat Resolutions. Several of them do not even meet once a year, and funds are allocated for various purposes by the Tahsildar too often without even the formality of a consultation. It is true that it will take many a long year before *Panchayats* intelligently follow the provisions of the Act and work it in the interests of the urgent requirements of the village. And the Tashildar, burdened with a multitude of exacting duties and finding the dilatory procedure of the ignorant *Panchayats* too slow, makes short work of the formalities and relies on his own judgment and initiative. Such a course may perhaps result in speedy improvements in the sanitation and health of the village, but leaves untouched the vital problem of reviving the personality of the villagers and developing their civic sense. The *Panchayats* might be left to themselves to learn from their own experience.

The Panchayat Acts

In Municipalities and local boards, there has been greater opportunity for the exercise of civic duties. In the first place, the transaction of business in English is a grave handicap to several of the members. Further, there is interference even in matters in which opinion is unanimous. The real sense of responsibility has

therefore yet to come. In its absence, election is too often sought for the status it gives; for the privilege of association with officers and for enhancing social influence, and not for the opportunity it gives for service. There are still too many ignorant or indifferent voters, and at elections undue influence and pressure is employed, and votes are not cast intelligently or with discrimination. There are unscrupulous members who get themselves elected as Presidents of Taluk and District Boards and Municipalities, as a means of adding considerably to their income.

Local Boards

These unsavoury details are given not as a warning against further instalments of power, but, strange as it may seem, as an argument for them. The checks and safeguards against corruption and bribery should not be imposed by the external authority of the Government, but should gradually develop within the local bodies themselves, and they will not, until interference is reduced to the minimum. In the absence of a policy of non-interference, the people lay at the door of the Government faults which are their own. Elections are contested with increasing keenness, and the voters are sensing their power for the first time much to the revival of popular interest in local affairs. For the interest to deepen, the Government must leave local bodies to themselves to learn by their own mistakes. What is true of local bodies and their powers is true in a greater measure in regard to the legislature. The men elected to these represent the

highest intelligence and character among the intelligentsia, actuated by the highest impulses for service to their country. But the occasions have been rare where their will, as expressed by clear majorities, has changed policies or decisions of the Government in any matter of importance. On the other hand, resort has been had to the very large powers invested in the Governor or Governor-General to veto resolutions of the Legislative Councils and Assemblies, even in cases where acceptance would not have entailed any serious consequences. The Primary Education Bill which the late Mr. Gokhale, now held up as the prince among Indian politicians, tried to push through the legislature, was rejected by the Government. A saw mill established by Government whether closed or retained would have made small difference to the Government, and yet a resolution for its abolition passed by a legislative council was vetoed by the Governor, and not long after, the Government had to close it of their own accord, because the venture, as the legislative members had prophesied, continued to run at a loss. It would almost seem that the executive act on the principle that success of the councillors in small matters would only pave the way for their success in more important affairs. In any case, the ineffectiveness of the councils has forced on the members a sense of helplessness all the more irritating to them, because of their higher sensibilities and their genuine desire to serve their country.

Legislatures

If there is a class which ought to feel contented and happy, it is the Indians in service under Government. But even among them, there has been a growing perception of their helplessness. With the enormous growth of routine, they find themselves in the meshes of rules and regulations. The personal touch with their superior officers is a thing of the past, and the sympathy and the mutual understanding which it alone ensures is no longer available. Until a few years ago, their pay in the various services remained stationary in spite of a rise in prices by 300 per cent. The disparity was not felt seriously when opportunities of adding to the income were many, and the standard of life was not high. The extras are fast disappearing with the growing intelligence of the people, and the standard of life has risen high. The dissolution of the Joint family is more rapid among the educated than amongst other classes, and their families are increasingly thrown on their own resources. The salaries earned have become hopelessly inadequate, and yet they have not had the benefit of any substantial increase such as the European section and the higher ranks of the Indian officers have had. Apart from the niggardly treatment, the racial discrimination has been continued too long. To the presence of a large percentage of European officers in what are called the security services, Indians will not object so long as British dominion has to be maintained. But there are services and departments

Even Officials Affected

where the racial bar ought not to exist. The superiority in intellect or in general ability of the class of Europeans, increasingly recruited to some of the services over Indians, is open to serious question, and Indians have been acquiring British educational qualifications of the same or higher standard, and yet, they find themselves debarred from appointments or promotions to which, except for the colour of the skin, they are entitled. It is small wonder if, along with the rest of their countrymen, the official class feel that they have to live eternally the life of the underdog.

There is thus the presence of a relentless power felt in every department of life by every class, community and caste, exerting in all alike its slow silent pressure and tending to reduce them to an inert shapeless mass incapable of self-regulated movements. Fortunately, India has never surrendered mind to matter. Her culture and civilisation is the exaltation of mind above the trammels and seductions of matter. All the science and precision of the administration with its deadweight of officialdom, negation of personality, and racial humiliation have fortunately failed to rid India of her mind. It has long bent down in patient humility to the ground and it can bend no more. The continued tug at the ropes that held it down has burst them asunder and it is gaining back its graceful height.

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17. THE INDIAN LANDED ARISTOCRACY

Neglected Undeservedly—Origin of Western Aristocracy—Persistence of the Class—Aristocratic Leadership in England—The Middle Class in the West—Only Two Classes in India—Indian Aristocracy in the Past—Occasional Centrifugal Tendency—Valuable Services—Changes under Foreign Rule—Political Impotence of the Class—Cornered and Embarrassed—Possible Benefits Lost—Inevitable Degradation in Recent Times—Present Position—Utter Helplessness—The Future.

IT is a fact, the significance of which is not clearly understood, that the Indian landed aristocracy has not been hitherto considered as a factor in the political advance of the country. In all countries the descent of political power has been step by step from the king to the aristocracy, from them to the middle class, and from these latter to the classes lower still. In India, the transfer is demanded direct to them by a middle class but recently formed. The first stage, it would appear, is to be skipped. That between the aristocracy and the middle class aiming at political power there should be pronounced hostility, is what one would naturally expect. Yet in India there is no such hostility, perhaps

Neglected Undeservedly

because there is no real antagonism in regard to the main objective. They have not, however, made common cause, because there is the fear, on the side of the aristocracy, that they will find themselves superseded in society far more than they are at present, and on the side of the middle class, that any share given to it in the political spoils, however small, would weight the scales overmuch in favour of the aristocracy. The failure to unite forces has been a great hindrance to the political advance of the country. The co-operation, in what, for balance and proportion, ought to be concerted effort, will not be effected until there is a clearer perception of the position and responsibilities of the Indian aristocracy than there seems to be at present.

The Westernised intelligentsia of India look upon the aristocracy in the same light as the highly democratised communities of Europe and America. There are, however, fundamental differences in origin between the aristocracies of the East and of the West. In Europe, their origin can be traced to a militaristic organisation of society required for the maintenance of peace and order during the period of political chaos that followed the downfall of the Roman Empire, and for the perpetuation, in essentials, of the system by which Greeks and Romans had their land cultivated by slaves. With the consolidation of European Kingdoms, the aristocracy should have been reduced in political importance. But political power in association with a militaristic organisation is not

Origin of Western Aristocracy

easily taken away, and the aristocracy has continued to retain an important place in European polity from which they have not yet been dislodged by the progress of democracy.

The attitude of hostility towards the aristocracy has not changed. The memory of the past is still too green for that. It is well to remember, however, that, in the wild character of the West, the evolution of peace and order would have been far more prolonged and painful, had not a vigilant and exacting feudalism assisted in the process. In the dark ages of Europe, the artistocracy's were the only lights that helped to relieve to some extent the enveloping darkness around.

The spread of literacy and education, and the self-reliance, intelligence and alertness born of unlimited competition, may have rendered the refining influences of the aristocracy uncongenial, but not superfluous. The fact remains that in refinement of thought and feeling, the blue-blooded are still ahead of the rest of the society, and even in regard to the virtues which are of the greatest assistance in a competitive society, the aristocracy has by no means been deficient. In spite of universal suffrage, they have still managed to retain a great part of their influence in the governance of the country. There have been, and are still, among them high souled and high minded men who are hard to beat in point of mental and moral stature.

Persistence of the Class

Nowhere is this more true than in England, in which, of all European countries, the aristocracy

has been at its best. Their political power did not long survive the necessities of peace and order. They have made common cause with the people to moderate the absolutism of the king and secure the liberties of the subjects. And by a wise foresight, they have been allowed to retain their social predominance and given a share in the administration in keeping with their status and dignities. The surge of popular movements has not yet undermined their social and political leadership. If democracy is at its best in England, it is because it is tempered and toned down by her aristocracy.

Aristocratic Leadership in England

Birth and breeding have an influence in the shaping of life and character as much for the better as for the worse. The successful observance by the individual of the social checks and restraints required in a life of stark competition, and the cultivation of social virtues make him discount the share of heredity in the fashioning of life. He forgets that what he has successfully acquired may have a foundation only in his perception of their convenience and helpfulness, and may not be anything inborn that will endure whether there are social advantages to gain or not.

The progress of society in the West is towards a mechanical standardisation, in which the graces and refinements of life have little place, and the aristocracy may find themselves gradually reduced to the common level, and there is much in the conditions of life in the West to effect that change. The physical conditions have tended

to assert themselves as peace and order have been secured. The greater zest for physical activity and exertion, which the niggardliness of nature and a cold climate have engendered among the people, have always tended to the creation of a middle class, only suppressed for a time by the slavery of Greece and Rome, and later, what amounted to the same thing, the oppressions of feudal Europe. Combining in themselves the virtues of the classes above and below with little of their vices, once formed they did not take long to wrest political power, and to secure to themselves all the facilities for further advance. The aristocracy suffered under the change in power and prestige. They stand to lose further as labour in its turn wrests power from the middle class, for labour is not after opportunity to make wealth but after wealth itself accumulated by others. The aristocracy may not survive this final assault.

The Middle Class in the West

In India as in other tropical countries, society has followed a different course of development. The lavishness of nature tended to simplicity in human needs and requirements. The level at which man needed to work to get an assured income was easily reached, and once reached, the indisposition to exertion, which a tropical climate tends to create, asserted itself. The object of work of far too many was to cease from work. The tendency in society, therefore, was for a division of society in two classes,

Only Two Classes in India.

those who toil and those who do not, and not three as in the West. The absence of a healthy middle class until recently accounts for the freedom from popular encroachment which royal authority in India enjoyed.

If aristocracy is inherent in tropical conditions, a climatic rather than a social necessity, it was an aristocracy of a different type. There was enough in nature's abundance for more equitable shares between those who toiled, and those who did not. There was no need, therefore, for a militaristic organisation feudal in character to be superimposed over the whole extent of the life of the people.

Indian Aristocracy in the past

Nor did the aristocracy enjoy that power. Caste and religion had ensured the people freedom of action in the more immediate and primary concerns of life, and the isolation and the self-sufficiency of the villages rendered economic causes slow in their operation and effects. Indian aristocracy had therefore very little in common with the feudal lords of the West, ever on the alert to wrest back from the king the political power they had been compelled to surrender to him. Drawn from different castes, they were not uniform in composition, and had no common grievance against the king as the feudal lords had. While individuals among them were distrusted, as a class they enjoyed the confidence of the king acting as his counsellors and agents, and were entrusted with responsible duties of administration.

They have not always been loyal and helpful. The chronic insecurity of Indian kingdoms exposed

the more powerful among them to the temptation of establishing principalities. To overawe a few villages into submission, misappropriate their taxes, organise an army of hirelings and declare oneself a chieftain was not very difficult when kings were preoccupied with wars or exhausted from them. Many an Indian principality and kingdom has originated in this way. Indian kingdoms were, after all, loose heaps of isolated villages not drawn together by administrative, economic or racial ties, and the detachment of a few was an easy task. No opposition to transfer of allegiance would ordinarily arise, because the taxes were fixed by custom and not liable to increase by the change.

Occasional Centrifugal Tendency

Barring these exceptional occasions, the aristocracy has been ordinarily loyal to their king. To the people in their neighbourhood they have almost always been very helpful. Of the service they were able to render to the humble peasantry around them, I have already dwelt elsewhere. Abuses of their influence and power were very rare, for pressure on land had not reached the stage where competitive rent is the rule. On the other hand, the competition was among the landlords for tenants. Rackrenting was therefore out of the question, and the land-owning class had to keep their tenants in good humour. They were, therefore, careful to spare no pains to retain their tenantry with them. Hence arose the ties of affection and goodwill, of obligation and service, which characterised the

Valuable Services

relations between the landed aristocracy and their tenants for a great part of Indian History.

This happy state of concord began to alter for the worse under foreign rule. The system of farming the revenue to the highest bidder, and the assignment of the revenue of villagers to commanders, who engaged themselves to supply the ruling power with soldiers, tended to substitute for the aristocracy a class who had little good feeling and less of traditional restraints to keep their demands to the customary level. Their predatory levies rendered more and more difficult the discharge of the obligations of the landed aristocracy to their peasant folk, for they were reduced in both their wealth and influence. But the more powerful among them alone had been affected this way. With the advent of the British, this condition altered for the worse. Except in Bengal and a few other territories, the ordinary Hindu law was allowed to operate with the result that a considerable number of the aristocracy was reduced to the level of the common people in the course of a few generations, while in Bengal the revenue settlement perpetuated a class, who for the most part had been only farmers of revenue and had no hereditary connection with the land, but were nevertheless raised to the position of the English aristocracy. It was not till the twenties of the 19th century that these mistakes were perceived by the authorities. The passing of the Impartible Estates Act saved what was left of the old aristocracy from

Changes under Foreign Rule

disintegration. Whether the policy pursued was from political design or from ignorance, it is difficult to say. The fact remains, however, that the reduction of the natural leaders of the people to political aud social impotence, and their demoralisation is among the more important requirements of the maintenance of political supremacy over a subject people. Safety is assured if the tall poppies are cut down. For, there will be no longer points round which discontent can gather. Bring individuals into direct relation with the ruling power and its agents, instead of through their erstwhile leaders, the men on whom they relied and whose voice they obeyed, and there is no more chance of discontent gathering and assuming formidable proportions. Ignore therefore the leaders, whittle down their influence over the people on every occasion, encourage the people to look away from them direct to the Government, and fissures start between the leaders and the rest of society and deepen, until they find themselves in opposite camps. Not until the processes are complete do the people find out that, in rendering the aristocracy helpless against them, they have rendered themselves even more helpless against the ruling power.

Political Impotence of the Class

While their extinction was prevented, the aristocracy was not associated with the administration. They have been, on the other hand, subject to neglect, if not humiliation. The underlings of the administration were drawn from classes many

stages removed from the landed nobility, and, in the earlier years of British administration, were recruited with little regard to their honesty or social status. The powers with which they were invested sufficed for unscrupulous exactions and for inflicting gross insults. One, who, but for British rule, would have been content to serve as a petty clerk to a rich landlord, may now become a Magistrate or Police officer and entangle the landlord in the meshes of law or make him observe useless formalities humiliating to his position. There have been, and there are still, instances of local magnates accepting the position of village headmen to avoid the possibility of humiliation at the hands of a man of low status using the powers of that petty office against them, and in remote rural tracts even now Government officers, newly arrived on transfer, are given costly presents and substantial *mamools* to maintain the dignity of the local magnates unimpaired in the eyes of the people around them.

Cornered and Embarrassed

Having retained the goodwill of these officers on their side, the more unscrupulous among them succumbed to the temptation of violating law. A number of them have been guilty of very grave offences, sometimes of even murder, but they very rarely paid the penalty, for the people were afraid to give evidence, and the officers were bribed heavily to close their eyes to them.

There is, therefore, much to be said for the dissociation of aristocracy from political and administrative power. In the prevailing ignorance

of the ryots and the dissolution of their communal life, official power is a dangerous weapon in the hands of a class who have, as landlords, already a great deal of power over their tenants. But, as between a local landlord with status and influence and petty officers who have never felt the responsibilities and restraints of a superior social status, official authority is better exercised by the former or under their direction, for they are more amenable to local opinion than the officials whose doings in remote villages are not open ordinarily to close scrutiny and investigation by their superior officers. The powers to supervise the work of village officers and arbitrate in disputes between villagers, or the powers of a justice of the peace would have been in keeping with their social position and would not have been ordinarily abused. They would have gone far in cultivating a sense of responsibility that would have helped the people to derive from them the many social services which their status and wealth enabled them to confer.

Possible Benefits Lost

Rank has its uses as well as abuses. It may not be congenial to democratised communities, but at certain stages of evolution aristocracies are not without their beneficial influence. The leisure and wealth they enjoy enable them to devote themselves to pursuits and activities, which add considerably to the amenities of life around them. Usually educated and cultured, and having greater opportunities to cultivate the emotions, they are

able to set standards of honour and refinement to society, and so add to the graces of life.

In India, where village communities were isolated and self-contained, an aristocracy of this description was a necessity, and should have received special recognition from the Government. On the other hand, they received no share of official or political power. Many an inroad was committed into their privileges, which helped to reduce their prestige and influence, and what is worse, their sense of responsibility. There was more than ever the need of preserving, if not strengthening, the old ties of affection and esteem. With the rapidly growing pressure on land, the competition between landlords for tenants was yielding place to a competition between tenants for land. The opportunities for rackrenting were rapidly developing, and the maintenance and improvement of the traditional relations would have gone a great way to deter them from taking advantage of them.

Inevitable Degradation in Recent Times

Legal protection is a poor substitute for moral safeguards at all times and in all societies, the more so in India because against the superior knowledge and resources of the landlord, a debased, illiterate and ignorant peasantry find themselves usually helpless in spite of the protection of law. There are still old families who have held their property from pre-British days, who have held fast to the old tradition, resisting the temptation to rackrenting and remembering their obligations to society. Had the new order of landlords, who sought

land more for its income than for the status it gave, been associated with the old and given a reasonable place in the administration, they would have developed their sense of responsibility to the peasantry as much as the old order. There was no place either for the old or the new in the scheme of administration, and the old families have tended to descend to the level of their latter day compeers.

An aristocracy of this description was bound before long to cease functioning as the head of society in rural parts. Rural life no longer congenial to them, they have been drawn in large numbers to towns, attracted to them by the luxury and excitements of life there, and they spend there their wealth, of which a part would have ordinarily gone to the improvement of their land and of the amenities of rural life. The contact with the educated and official classes, and admission to the higher circles of society has had its beneficial effects on them, but improvement has not reached the stage where the light they themselves have received is reflected on to the toiling peasantry to brighten and cheer up their lives. They are still concerned with securing their recognition in administration and politics more in accordance with their status.

Present Position

In the meanwhile rural society continued without its social head, and physically, mentally and morally impoverished and prostrate. The wealthy and the educated are drawn away to the towns. A prematurely introduced individualism

has worked havoc among communal institutions, while education, co-operation, citizenship and opportunity, without which individualism is a curse, are not for the villager yet, and will take very long to reach him. In the meanwhile, there is none to help him to withstand the exactions of the officers of the Sircar, to tide over difficult times, to arbitrate in their factions and fights, to restore their personality and to revive hopes that are long dead.

Utter Helplessness

For the balanced and ordered progress of India, the aristocracy has still to play an important part, not an aristocracy lost to the luxury and excitements of towns, but one which considers that its place is among the people who labour to produce the wealth they enjoy, and who make their moral and material improvement their primary concern in life. No scheme of self-government can be said to be complete which provides no place for the aristocracy.

The Future

18. INDIAN EDUCATION

Vernacular Schools of the Past, Entirely Misjudged—Sanskrit Schools—Ancient Universities—An Avoidable Divergence—Absence of Conflict between Religion and Science—Ancient System Well-rooted and Well-balanced—An Ill-rooted New System with Questionable Methods—Incorrect Perspective—Alternatives Discarded—Destruction without Construction—Low Aims—Neglect of Religious Precept or Example—Suppression of the Vernacular—No Filtration but a Double Divorce—Faith undermined—Blunder in Girls' Education—Examinations and Narrow Culture—Dual Lives—Helplessness—Enforced Falseness—Ineffectiveness—Political Impotence—Preparing for a Gigantic Task—The Masses.

AMONG the more important forces that are helping to shape Indian destiny are those generated by Indian education. To understand the nature and strength of these and estimate their influence, it is necessary to describe the main features of the system of education that has been in operation for a century. Before doing so, however, it is necessary to supplement the information on the indigenous system given under caste.

As has been pointed out therein, caste and the Joint family constituted by themselves the main educational agency. What was imparted in the vernacular schools, relatively to what these institutions afforded, was subsidiary to a degree which Westerners can hardly realise. Life in the villages was a well established routine, defined by custom and status. The influence of the external world was little; the villager lived day to day the life which his ancestors lived, and followed the calling his ancestors followed. No cloud or storm swept over the little horizon of the village to disturb the deep tranquillities of village life. In the intimacies of these limited neighbourhoods and the sequestered life there, literacy was more a convenience than an accomplishment. A knowledge of the three R's was all that was necessary to help him in the small transactions of his little village world. Literacy did not help to make him more efficient at his calling, or to live a healthier or cleaner life. All the instruction bearing on these came by word of mouth from father to son, or the master craftsman to his apprentice. There were hardly any vernacular books on these subjects. The village school was not, therefore, a primary school, not the lowest rung in an educational ladder intended to help the pupil to pass on to higher grades of knowledge and training, and was never intended or sought as such.

Vernacular Schools of the Past

Those who have been critical of Indian village schools have judged them from the

standards of the primary school, which is intended to meet a set of very different conditions. They forget that when heredity, environment and tradition influenced the people so largely as they did in India until not very long ago, the village school could very well rest content with the three R's. It has to be transformed into a primary school, when the son has ceased to follow the profession of the father, and family tradition and environment are things of the past. An educational ladder has no purpose to serve without a social ladder, and caste forbade the latter.

Entirely Misjudged

In addition to the vernacular schools, there were Sanskrit schools in which language, literature, grammar, rhetoric and religion were taught. These schools were open to the more respectable classes of society, but the bulk of the students were drawn from among the Brahmins. The other castes were taught the more secular branches of learning as rhetoric, astrology and medicine. Instruction was gratuitous, and food and lodging were given in addition to a large proportion. The teachers met the expenditure required, from the gifts bestowed on them on occasions of funeral obsequies, festivals and feasts.

Sanskrit Schools

While these schools were started and run by individual teachers, there were a few universities in which the number of students ran into several thousands and of professors into as many

hundreds. They had rich endowments, in the shape of assignments of whole villages or the revenues from them, that went to the support of the thousands that congregated within their walls. We have picturesque accounts of these seats of learning, from travellers in Ancient India which cannot fail to impress the reader with the breadth of outlook, the passion for truth, the piety and simplicity of life inculcated in these universities.

Ancient Universities.

The chief feature that strikes one in the indigenous system is the total dissociation between the vernacular and Sanskrit education. But in the higher stages of the former, pupils were taught Sanskrit literature or their renderings in the vernacular scripts, and the students of Sanskrit schools, who wanted to read and write in the vernacular, studied the script at home. Nor was Sanskrit education the exclusive preserve of the Brahmin. But the fact has to be acknowledged that these were on the whole divergent institutions. The branches of these opposite trees did not interlace sufficiently to shade the road of Indian life. The proportion between the Brahmin and the non-Brahmin in the vernacular schools was reversed in the Sanskrit schools. Had the same proportion been maintained in the latter, their atmosphere would have been less saturated with religion, and the arts and sciences should have progressed better as much from their freedom from religious domination as from the more practical requirements of the non-Brahmin classes.

An Avoidable Divergence

There were other limitations, but they were limitations of an age which had not yet repudiated the tradition which believed in the infallibility of the ancient seers, and in the truth of the discoveries they made in sciences and arts. Medieval as the conception appears to be at first sight, it should not be forgotten that Hinduism was not a religion with crystallised doctrines, on whose integrity it depended. On the other hand, it was elastic, and could so adapt itself to new developments of thought in science or philosophy that it did not set its face against them as the medieval priesthood in Europe did. As a matter of fact, the opportunity of such discoveries existed for the most part only for the Brahmins themselves, drawn together by ties too strong for the discoverer to use them to his own advantage at the risk of the disruption of the hierarchy of which his caste was the head. The religion that could supersede Buddhism in India, and face with equanimity the advancement of Western science, would not have interposed a barrier to the progress of Indian science.

Absence of Conflict between Religion and Science

Whatever the defects of the indigenous system, it had its roots deep in the sentiments and requirements of the people. It created no discords or dislocations between the individual and society, or between him and the home, or between class and class. It was calculated to develop no new lines of thought or endeavour, no new forces social or religious, and therefore

was not looked upon with distrust or suspicion. Supported by the voluntary contributions of the people, centering round the personality and learning of teachers, independent of control by any external authority, the system escaped almost all the mechanical regulations arising from centralisation. Those who sought education knew the exact place assigned to the educated in society, and were not fired by ambitions, too extravagant to subordinate cultural to utilitarian aims.

Ancient System Well-rooted and Well-balanced

The Western system, introduced and developed by a foreign agency, had necessarily to start without any one of those advantages natural to an indigenous system. That by itself was a serious drawback. But there were others far more serious. Had the high ideals, which actuated some at least of the originators of the scheme, been pursued steadily, the system might have effected successfully the very delicate adjustments necessary for it to be fruitful of good results. But before long, the political advantages of creating a class English in all but the colour of their skin, who would serve as a bulwark of British Rule, were perceived. The more immediate and pressing need, however, was for a subordinate service of English educated Indians to carry on the minor responsibilities of an administration rapidly developing in complexity and routine, whose knowledge of the language would facilitate enormously the work of guidance and supervision.

An Ill-rooted New System

Worse than all, the system was in the hands of people, who were, if not actually hostile, little in sympathy with the sentiments and ideals of the people, and who indeed nursed the hope that the education which they imparted would win the heart of India for Britain, and its soul for Christ.

The methods of education were no less open to criticism. The choice of the University of London as the model for Indian Universities was unfortunate. The result of a wave of educational enthusiasm which repudiated the aristocratic traditions of Oxford and Cambridge, it aimed more at quantity than quality, and had necessarily to rest content with the unreliable test of external examinations. Educational theory too had not developed so far at the time to perceive the modifying influences of heredity and environment, and the educationists in India as well as in England believed that education started on a clean slate.

With Questionable Methods

It was natural for the authorities to believe that education on Western lines and in Western science would speedily destroy a culture that had its tortuous and matted roots in every phase of Indian life and thought. They failed to perceive that the disciplines of caste and the Joint family were too rigorous to allow alien thought and standards to gain easily any stronghold on the educated classes. They saw Indians on the same level with them in point of culture and intellect, but inhabiting tenements and generally living the

life of the simple villagers round them, their education producing little external effect either on themselves or on their neighbours, and yet, rather than inferring from them the overpowering influence of the twin Hindu Institutions of the Joint family and caste, they concluded from it the utter futility of indigenous education. Had the right conclusion been drawn, they would not have been slow to perceive that an education alien in spirit and content, and concerned only with the intellect, would prove less than equal to the forces of conservatism.

Incorrect Perspective

With the advance Educational theory has made since the introduction of education, and with the experience of the actual results achieved, it is easy to be highly critical, but the survey attempted here is not intended to criticise the authors, but to determine the share of education in the development of the political consciousness of the people.

The aim of education should have been the improvement of existing institutions rather than their supersession. However faulty they were, their voluntary support by the people, their freedom from the stereotyping influences of a centralised authority, the respect and esteem their teachers commanded, their independence and their catering to the needs felt by the people, were features which a new system, prematurely introduced by an alien agency, could not develop, and indeed, has failed to develop even after a

Alternatives Discarded

century. English as a language, not as a cultural subject, introduced to them would have been eagerly sought by the students and would have provided those who cared for it with the key to Western sciences and literature. This arrangement failing, there was still open to the authorities the course of establishing tests in English for admission to Government employment, the people being left to their own resources, if need be, to acquire the qualifications demanded by the tests.

Either of these courses would not have involved the ruin and decay of indigenous institutions; but what is far more important, the students would have been well grounded in their own culture to withstand better the onslaught of an alien civilisation. The contest would have been less unequal and less calculated to create the bitterness of humiliation. The critical appreciation of an alien culture, to be of high vitalising quality, should be by men who have intellectually apprehended their own culture. If their admission of its worth, or even its superiority to their own, is to exert any moral influence, it must proceed from reasoned conviction, and not because close association was permitted to the rival, and they were allowed to grow up ignorant of the charms of their own. But the authorities were out to destroy rather than fulfil.

Destruction without Construction

The aims and ideals were low not on the side of the authorities alone, but on the side of the students as well. Those that were drawn

to English education sought it with no higher object than employment under Government and the power, prestige and high social status that went with it. Once educated and entrusted with a modicum of power, whatever his caste or birth, an Indian could cut his way right across all social barriers, and raise himself and the members of his family to the level of public regard. These were the main influences at work in the spread of education, and, in the increasing demand for educated men to fill the subordinate ranks in the administration, they allowed no higher ideals to emerge.

Low Aims

The introduction of religious instruction would have acted as a wholesome corrective to the gross utilitarianism of the system, but it was excluded as much by the policy of strict neutrality of the Government, as by the maze of creeds and beliefs so apparently in conflict that they could not be reduced to a simple course suitable for immature minds drawn from all sects and denominations, without divesting them of those vital appeals to religious thought and feeling, which alone make religious instruction worth having. The schools and colleges established by the missionaries were better off in this respect, not so much because of the religion taught there, but of the example set by the missionaries of a life more or less in accordance with the spirit of Christ's teaching. What little effect these might have produced was rendered impossible by the setting

Neglect of Religious Precept or Example

up by Government of their own secular institutions as models to copy.

Nor were the other elements vital to the formation of character present in the curriculum. The vernacular was neglected. Whatever its deficiencies in point of vocabulary and literature, the taste for it should have been cultivated to enable the pupils to conserve and augment their cultural inheritance. Its suppression in the early stages of education reversed the natural relation that should subsist between the mother tongue and an alien language.

Suppression of Vernacular

It was the inherent right of the vernacular to be treated both as a language and cultural subject. The usurpation of that position by English failed to develop, if it did not actually destroy, the taste for vernacular learning, and paved the way for a closer acquaintance with Western than with Indian literature. The foreign medium added heavily to the burden on the student, on the one hand, making difficult the mastery of the subject taught, and on the other, of giving correct expression to what was understood.

Foreign Medium

The gradual filtration of Western culture, which the authorities had hoped for, did not follow, for the one-sided education resulted in estrangements between the pupils and their homes; and between the educated and the masses. The vernaculars of the educated grew pale and stunted under the dense shade of English, and proved too

No Filtration but a Double Divorce

often unequal to the strain of interpreting a foreign culture.

An equipoise of vernacular and English was of vital necessity to reconcile the many divergencies between what was taught at school and what was practised in the home. Customs and ceremonies hitherto interpreted in terms of Faith, unless reinterpreted in terms of Reason, ran the serious risk of being dismissed as superstitions, or of retaining but a half-hearted, if not insincere, allegiance. The explanations of the mother left the children wholly unsatisfied, and to their growing intelligence and knowledge the mother appeared as grossly superstitious and ignorant. Her intense devotion alone has saved her from the contempt and disregard of their children.

Faith Undermined

A well-thought out scheme of women's education might have avoided the serious dislocation in the home. But the kind actually given to girls had far less relation to their requirements in life than the education of the boys had to theirs. Whatever the faults of the educational system so far as the boys were concerned, it fitted them fairly well for the vocation for which they sought it. The Indian girl's sphere was the home, and the education given should have been designed to fit her better for the duties and responsibilities of the home, and yet, the minds of both the boys and girls were run into the same mould. The

Blunder in Girl's Education

wife, educated as well, does help largely to prevent the maladjustments of the home, but it was a spurious concord born of an identical mental history, which involved no adjustments of two rival cultures. Indeed, with the spread of education among girls, the one conservative influence in the family circle has disappeared, and both husband and wife have been cast adrift from the moorings of Indian society.

Had these factors been fully operative, there should have been a wide-spread revolution of thought in India, but the majority of the educated received no more than a veneer of Western culture. Admission to Government service, almost the sole avenue of employment for many decades, being dependant on a pass or a degree, examinations assumed an importance far beyond their real worth, to the serious neglect of qualities for which examinations are no test at all. The habit of cram which was encouraged by the rigour of the examination system, instruction through a foreign medium and the defective methods of teaching in primary and middle schools, if not in later stages, prevented the play of thought on the vast accumulations of ill digested facts, and rendered even more superficial the effects of education.

Examinations and Narrow Culture

Much the larger proportion succumbed to these, but there are others whose minds rise superior to the limitations and in whom, therefore, education tends to produce more permanent results. Finding themselves confronted

by the puzzling divergencies of East and West, they endeavoured to act up to their convictions. They found themselves, however, committed against their inclination and better judgment, under the penalties of a social ostracism, to the observance of customs, which had lost their meaning for them. They were therefore compelled to raise a dead wall between their convictions and practices. A pathetic conservatism compelled them to withdraw the more sacred of their convictions from the fierce lights of the West to the inner recesses of the mind, where only Eastern lamps were allowed. A dual life was inevitable, fatal alike to vigour of conviction and of character.

Dual Lives

Indigenous culture was individualistic and aimed at the perfection of soul and person, and increasing the power of perception of a unity beneath diversity. The gain to society from the individual was more by the example set by him of a life of purity and self-denial. Compelled to accept the standards of communal life, he could not set his thoughts in the direction of their improvement, or of effecting changes in his life, which tended to destroy his identity with his caste fellows. In the West, on the other hand, the individual may progress from class to class, and access to each depended on his acceptance of the standards of the class to which he gained admission, which, in their turn, were discarded for a still higher set, when he moved on to the class next above. The demand, therefore, on his education was continuous

Helplessness

for expressing itself in measurable external standards to facilitate his advance in social status. It is obvious that education was as much a matter of external as of internal discipline in the West.

As long as the ideal of Indian life was self-denial, any divergence between individual inclinations and communal obligations caused no harm. But the antagonism between a self-assertive culture newly introduced and indigenous institutions was so acute that the individual could not be true to his culture and his society at the same time. In the entire absence of any provision for the training of character to meet the new requirements, and under the rigidity of the social framework, the individual proved false, either to the society or to his newly acquired culture, more often to the latter than to the former. Either way, character was bound to be affected. It was fortunate that, in the earlier years of education, the pass or degree opened the avenue to Government employment, and the individual, with the prestige and status it gave, could initiate minor reforms in his caste or defy with impunity his caste obligations. The formation of the educated into a separate class, with diminished allegiance to their various castes, and with a set of new standards of their own, more in accord with their ways of thought, would have gone a great way to reduce the mental conflict.

Enforced Falseness

For these factors to be effective, however, the prerequisite was their recognition as their leaders

by the people, or at least by the Government. But their heterogeneous composition and the communal consciousness, still lingering, made it impossible for them to unite their forces to secure that recognition. Their status and influence were precarious, and were but the concomitants of their prestige and powers as Government servants. The Government treated them much as a man treats the offspring of his illicit love. The recognition of their usefulness implied no recognition of any social status. The masses feared and even respected them, but not as their leaders. They mistrusted their education. Their vote for them was not an indication of their appreciation of their services, but of the influence of their landlord or the pressure of the local officer of Government on their behalf.

In-effectiveness

It was an anomalous and extremely irritating position. If education failed to develop character, it had sharpened the sensibilities. The educated were further embittered by the increasing unemployment among them, by the growing disproportion between their income and their requirements, by the growing perception of political wrongs inflicted on the country, and by the very unseemly incidents inevitable in racial predominance. In so disturbed a mental state, attention would fasten itself on those factors in the degradation of India for which the ruling race was responsible. Had advance to political power kept reasonable pace with the advance in education, the sense of

Political Impotence

responsibility that would have followed as a result would have eased the situation. But the Government were not prepared for the advance. They found in the curiously mixed results, the dangerous enthusiasms and the incorrect perspectives of the educational system, sufficient pretext for a refusal to entrust them with political power. Socially ineffective, they were politically impotent.

There was no alternative for the educated but to substantiate their claims to leadership by winning the confidence of the people. They had to qualify for leadership by sacrifice and service. They had to unlearn much of what they learnt, and learn much of what they neglected. They had to rise to a true conception of the social forces, and of the influence they wielded. They had to guide, as well as rouse popular feeling. They had, to harmonise East and West, to be themselves the best exponents of that harmony. It was a task that required disciplined and devoted lives, matured and perfected by patient study and purified by sacrifice, their whole course, every thought and action, regulated by the one principle of making the notion of a regenerated India patent to the minds of a passionless population, and slowly reconciling it to the arrangements and the adjustments, and the disciplines and sacrifices necessary for the successful issue of so gigantic an enterprise.

Preparing for a Gigantic Task

The rapprochement has not proved difficult. There is enough discontent among the masses.

Dirt, disease and death are the lot of far too many among them. The many duties and responsibilities laid on them by their religion and society, they are finding it impossible to discharge. A compulsory individualism is making havoc of ties and attachments which they had long looked upon as sacred. They have much to suffer and little to hope for in their life. They are increasingly conscious that they are the victims of a colossal machinery, mechanical in its processes and relentless in its operations. Their own culture and civilisation, to which they are still deeply attached, are being superseded. Accustomed only to the placid back-waters of rural life, they find themselves suddenly in a storm-oppressed ocean with no chart, rudder, oar or sail. They shout for help. What wonder, if they are more and more inclined to accept as leaders the educated, no longer aloof and nursing a sense of superiority, but deeply in sympathy with them and purifying themselves by sacrifice and discipline!

The Masses

19. EXPLOITATION

Westernisation—Healthy and Unhealthy Exploitation —Pre-Machine Days—Modern Tendencies—The Inevitable Path—The East India Company—Tyranny—Effects of the Industrial Revolution —Use of Political Power—Investment Abroad —Policy of Liberal Concessions—Export Trade—Import Trade—Banking—Shipping—Railways—Entrenched—Indian Disabilities—Knowledge of Economics—Fall of Silver—Exporters' Profits and Importers' Advantage—The Fowler Committee—The Gold Exchange Standard—Closure of the Mint and Government Position—Rising Price-Level—Misuse of the Reserves—The Real Objection—India's loss and England's gain—Ditto after the War—Protection and Free Trade—Instance of the Cotton Excise—Decay of Established Industries—A few due to Change of Taste—Ruin of Indian Shipping—Capitalists beside Capital—The Cart before the Horse—Right Lines of Policy.

HAVING dealt with the more important features of Hindu civilisation, we may now deal with the forces that have been and are at work, which threaten it with disintegration, dissolution and decay. These forces may be summed up under the term Westernisation. In its broad sense, it implies not only a cultural conquest by

the West in the imposition by it of social theories and economic doctrines, which form the basis of Western civilisation, and constitute its distinctive feature. Whether Westernisation of this character is good for India is a matter that will have to be considered later. For the present, we are concerned with the forces that are rapidly dissolving away the fabric of Indian civilisation.

Westernisation

Among these, one of the most powerful is exploitation. The word is so closely associated with imperialism that it has deservedly a bad odour. But the exploitation by a people of the natural resources of their country is in itself a healthy sign. It indicates that the best resources of brain and muscle are brought to bear on production, and that therefore a high standard of efficiency is being maintained in the interests of the welfare of the people as a whole. But, when the exploitation is by one people of another, the symptom is of a grave disease.

Healthy and Unhealthy Exploitation

Exploitation of this character is a modern phenomenon. Previous to the introduction of machinery, the empires that existed were tax-gathering empires, and rulers were content with the taxes that were levied from the conquered peoples. Under the Roman Imperial system, the conquering race reduced independent cultivators to the position of slaves or serfs, and claimed a large share of the produce of their labour. Feudalism was the dominance of a conquering

Pre-Machine Days

race on a smaller scale. In these arrangements too, there were oppressions, but production being by hand or implements worked with the hand, no member of society, except among the rich, could afford or was compelled to be idle, and while the higher or the ruling classes took away substantial portions of what the serf earned, sufficient was left for him to keep body and soul together. Concentrated production such as by machinery being impossible, concentrated wealth was equally impossible. Previous to the regime of machinery, there was, therefore, a more equitable distribution of wealth. The exploitation by one people of another had thus definite limits.

The introduction of machinery worked by steam and electricity has made for bulk production, and gradual elimination of human agency. Not only, therefore, have large classes of people to face unemployment, but wealth has become concentrated in a small minority of the population. The capital that is thus accumulated cannot be allowed to remain idle, and therefore has to be invested for further production. In every country there is a limit to production set by the extent of natural resources, of raw materials and the facilities for power development. This limit is soon reached, and to meet the requirements of investment of capital, production has to be attempted which has a diminishing correspondence to the resources and facilities of the country. What is lacking in these is made good by scientific inventions and

Modern Tendencies

discoveries, and by growing abroad what cannot be grown at home. These raw materials are, for the most part, to be obtained from the tropics, and their supply is subject to the uncertainties and unevenness of small scale production prevalent there. The investments in machine production are on such a scale that uncertainties, of whatsoever character, have to be eliminated to avoid loss. It was therefore necessary that production of raw materials should be organised, and on the same large scale as their conversion into finished products. Capital then came to be invested in tropical countries for producing raw materials, or for purchasing, grading and refining them to the level demanded by machinery. The investment of capital in the tropics required the presence of owners or their agents there, and these were liable to come in conflict with indigenous interests when lands had to be purchased in suitable localities, buildings had to be put up or purchased, or when the growing of raw materials had to be done on a scale to meet with the requirements, not of hand but of machine production. To eliminate these conflicts, the best way was to rule the country, or by threat of force to secure the required concessions. Where the inhabitants are disorganised or uncivilised in the countries concerned, conquest is easy, but where, from numerical strength or vastness of the country or from mutual jealousies, conquest was impossible, privileges were secured which met the requirements of a steady supply of raw materials, or of a good market.

These are the processes that have resulted in a division of the African continent between European powers, and that have led to the annexation by one power or other of various islands and archipelagoes, and to the creation of special privileges, now enjoyed by several of them in China and in Persia, Tibet and Siam.

The Inevitable Path

These processes will continue until there are no more territories to be annexed or divided, or until there are no countries left in which to secure privileges. Till then production will go forward under the stimulus of newly acquired privileges or territories, and under the stimulus of mutual competition. The West cannot cry halt to itself. The forces it has created are driving it forward, and will continue to do so, until it is brought to a halt by forces that may rise against it which it cannot overcome, or by wars between themselves.

In India, the process has been more or less on the general lines described above. The Muhammadan Empires were tax-gathering empires. They might have imposed taxes and levied tributes heavier than Hindu kings. They might have claimed the land as belonging to the State, but there was no exploitation. Even in the early days of the British, there was nothing more serious. The Europeans came to India as traders, and sought from the rulers of the country only such privileges as facilitated their trade. Even when the East India Company acquired sovereign power over Indian territories, they remained, for

the most part, content with the revenues of their new found possessions. The taxes levied in most cases were very heavy, having been governed by the standards of exaction which the previous rulers of the country were compelled, by the necessities of incessant war, to adopt. But as the ryots began to throw up lands rather than cultivate them, the assessment was lowered. The taxes so collected were very heavy, and enabled the Company to finance its campaigns in India, and at the same time, pay handsome dividends to the shareholders of the Company. But, for several decades of the early period, the main reliance was on trade, and the concessions, they were able to wring from Hindu and Muhammadan Kings in return for military assistance given, enabled them to swell their trade to large dimensions, and finally to become almost the only agency in the field.

The East India Co.

In organising trade and ensuring a steady supply of Indian goods, great injustice began to be perpetrated in those provinces in which political power passed into their hands. The skilled artisans were compelled to work in factories against their will, and on wages far below the legitimate standard. Greater abuse prevailed when the clerks of the Company or other Britishers set up trade on their own account. The foreign trade of the country was thus captured by Europeans. Even with these, production was not disorganised,

Tyranny

for the factories of the Company were very few compared to the size of the country, and the producing castes could not be severely affected. The real trouble began with the Industrial Revolution. Hardly was England able to produce her requirements, when heavy import duties were imposed on Indian goods so as to exclude them, and when production exceeded the requirements of the Home market and distant markets could be supplied, the scales were completely turned against India, and Indian production was hampered by various tariff devices so as to leave the field clear for English goods. The Industrial Revolution would have been more laborious, more expensive and far less successful, had political power not been used to stifle Indian Industries. As it was, the

Effects of the Industrial Revolution

movement of Indian goods from one part of the country to another was rendered expensive and difficult by taxes and tolls, from which English goods were exempt, which gave the latter a considerable advantage. The demand for finished Indian goods was gradually replaced by a demand for the raw materials, not only for the requirements of the Home market but for India itself. To the extent English goods replaced Indian goods both in India and abroad, Indian industries were bound to suffer. If the disorganisation has not succeeded in 150 years in wiping out Indian industries, it is because Indian customs and habits have been too well fixed to be destroyed rapidly, and caste organisation has given sufficient economic resistance

to Indian industries. But the blow was serious. It was in the weaving, dyeing and printing industries that India was predominant. The manufacture of these had been the monopoly of India, and had brought her enormous wealth from all parts of the old world from very early times.

In determining the share of England in the decay of Indian industries, we should not fail to make due allowances for the fact that machine production has a certain superiority over hand production, which would have asserted itself in any case in the long run. But there is considerable reason to believe that the struggle would have been more prolonged, had not political power been misused to turn the scale. In the first place, in spite of the lapse of 150 years and the perfection of machinery and the organisation of trade, the weaving industry still survives in India, producing a third of the total requirements of India. In the earlier days of struggle, neither machinery nor trade organisation was so perfect, and the advantages on the side of machine production would not have been so great as against hand production with several centuries of experience and organisation behind it. A third important consideration is that the capital required for machine production was derived for the most part from India. In the latter half of the 18th century the money taken to England in hard cash, according to Gokhale's estimate, ran to a 1,000 millions sterling. The financing of machine production was done for the most part with the money so drained from India.

Use of Political Power

With the increasing knowledge of India on the part of the English, they saw the field for investment of capital widening. In the earlier days, money was required for investment more 'at home' than abroad, for machinery had to be set up and manufacture commenced. When production was started and trade expanded, capital was required more abroad than 'at home' to organise supplies of raw materials, and for investment in enterprises like railways, mining, and crops such as tea and coffee.

Investment Abroad

Every concession and every facility was given to encourage investment. Mining Companies had to give but nominal fees for prospecting licenses and exceedingly low Royalties. Land for coffee, tea, rubber, indigo and pepper was given practically for the asking, and assessment was fixed very low, and even now, after the lapse of half a century, it is but a fraction of what land under crops like paddy etc., has to bear. The profits in these has varied from 100 to 150 per cent. during the last several years. Similarly, indigo and jute companies declared for years profits as high. The investment on Railways was encouraged by a guarantee of 5 per cent. and capital was procured on lines which secured maximum returns to the companies, while the loss to the Indian Government amounted to 395 crores of Rupees by the year 1900.

Policy of Liberal Concessions

The export of raw materials has been in the hands of Europeans from the very beginning. There was practically no risk involved in the

earlier days of the trade, for local purchases were made on the basis of prices agreed upon in advance for supplies to London. The purchases were made through brokers, or *Dubashes*, who were given a small concession for the risk they ran in securing the supplies at prices usually fixed by firms which often were too low. The profit of these companies used to be enormous, and it is said that the record of work for a year was not considered satisfactory until about a 100 per cent. was realised. The competition between various countries in the West, and between them and Indian companies now being established slowly, has reduced the profits, but the absence of it in the earlier years went far to secure for the older firms a commanding position in the Indian market which no competition can undermine easily.

Export Trade

If export trade is in the hands of Europeans, the import trade is no less so, most of the requirements of India as regards machinery, implements, articles of daily use as clothing. sugar, soap, etc., being obtained by European firms who distribute them among local dealers, or engage in the retail trade themselves. The capital invested is so large and the organisation is so perfect, that Indian firms have very little chance of competition, and usually, the latter occupy fields which, from the risks involved or the low profits derivable from them, are left alone by Europeans. The supplies of European residents in the

Import Trade

country are almost exclusively by and from European firms.

Most of the first class hotels in India are established by Europeans. The profits to be earned from catering to their requirements go almost entirely to them.

The financing of the trade is done by banking corporations of which the superior staff are for the most part Europeans, who therefore advance money to their countrymen far more readily than to Indian merchants, though the financial position of the latter may be as strong as, or even stronger than, that of the European client. This, in spite of the fact that several of the Banks, as for example the Imperial Bank, have their capital subscribed for the most part by Indians.

Banking

We may now deal with transport. The interests in transport are predominantly British. The world-wide commerce of India was carried on from very early times in ships built and manned by Indians, and, in tonnage, construction and the strength of the materials used, they were superior to any made in any part of the world. As late as 1800, the Governor-General of India declared that there were 10,000 tons of shipping built to withstand a voyage as far as the Thames. Indian teak was superior to oak. The construction of ships with iron in England turned the tables against India, and the invention of steamships, not many decades afterwards, extinguished the hopes of Indian shipping. Of her

Shipping

vast sea-borne trade only 2 per cent. is now estimated to be carried in Indian ships, and of the coastal trade which, by all accepted canons, ought to be exclusively hers only, 13 per cent is hers. The predominance of British interests in Indian shipping affected the Indians in three ways. In the first place, it cuts off one avenue of employment which Indians enjoyed for centuries. Secondly, a scheme of differential rates has been employed which render the transmission of goods from one Indian port to another more costly than their transmission between India and foreign countries, a disparity that tends to operate as a great hardship in the disposal of Indian manufactures. Far more unfair, more deliberate and more fatal in its effects has been the system of deferred rebates and rate wars under which no Indian steam navigation company has any but the remotest chance of success.

The tale of Railway development in India is no less dismal. An invention of the West, its effects were more indirect. The Guarantee system, under which it was introduced, made for the prevalence of slackness and inefficiency, and for abuses involving great wastage and extavagance, so much so that the guaranteed interest had to be paid for several decades from the taxpayers' money,

Railways

and railways did not bring any profit to the Government until 1900, nearly 54 years after their first introduction into India. Apart from that, their development has been at the expense of traffic along the navigable waterways, of which there are at least 2,600 miles.

and some of the railway companies have been guilty of extinguishing traffic on these by deliberately fixing absurdly low rates on their lines. In regard to rates, there has been discrimination against Indian interests on the same lines which the shipping companies followed. The effect of these has been to favour unduly transport of goods to and from ports, in other words, export of raw materials from and import of manufactured goods into India. The Deferred rebate system of the shipping companies has its analogue in the Block system of the railway companies.

The neglect of waterways has been in the interests of the Railway companies, and practically at their bidding. Had the companies been Indian, or better, had the railways been State-managed, we should have had in India a scheme of balanced development in which the waterways and railways were equally the concern of the Government as it has been in England, in Belgium and Holland. But Indian Railways from their inception, and for several decades after, had for their object not the development of India, but the tapping of the areas with abundance of raw materials, and quick transport of imported goods and of soldiers. Since the report of the Acworth committee there has been a change for the better, but we are still far from the days when the long neglected and disused waterways will renew their acquaintance with oar or sail.

These various fields of investment have been described at length to show what little is left to Indians themselves in their own country.

Practically in every important field, the European is already in occupation, and he has behind him in such abundant measure the resources of organisation, of credit, of experience and of political power, that the Indian has not half a chance of successful competition.

Entrenched

The rivalry between the European and the Indian is on altogether unequal terms. The Europeans represent a highly industrial community in which capital is organised, venturesome, and has behind it experience and expert knowledge of the highest order. The available capital is very large and can be had at low rates of interest, and it has the advantage that political power can be utilised to further its interests in the country of its investment. Facilities in law may be created in its interests. There are provisions in the Contract Act, which are for the special benefit of the European merchants or traders. The Labour Acts passed are exclusively in the interests of the planting community. Roads are opened or kept in good repair in planting areas much sooner and better than elsewhere. Indian officers, who do not see eye to eye with the planter or the merchant in regard to any matter affecting the interests of the Europeans, may be transferred at their instance. No station master or customs officer dare claim *mamools* in respect of goods to be shipped where the European is concerned, whereas the Indian consignee has to pay and pay heavily.

Indian Disabilities

The Indians represent a community in which economic organisation has not advanced from rural to an industrial stage, in which economic viscosity is still great from the absence of the investing habit and the prevalence of illiteracy. Capital is not available, or is available only at high rates of interest. The discipline and organisation of limited liability companies have not been sufficiently acquired. The facilities which can be obtained through influence or pressure on officials, and the many advantages which the prestige of a ruling class confers on an individual belonging to it, are not for Indians. These are serious handicaps in the rivalry with Europeans in fields in which they have already established a predominant position for several decades.

The facilities at the command of the Europeans described do not include what may be brought under Currency and Exchange. These are among the most important, but are not easily realised by those who have not made a study of this important branch of economics. Even among men who have graduated in economics as their special study, the intricacies of Currency and Exchange are not known sufficiently well to enable them to grasp the manipulations in these, effected from time to time, often in the furtherance of British commerce and industry.

Knowledge of Economics

Professors of economics have been, in the past, guilty of a very serious dereliction of duty in denying to Indian students the knowledge which

ought to have been theirs, not only because they were students of the subject but because they were Indians. The diffusion of knowledge is now proceeding better than in the past, but not sufficiently quick for the educated Indian public generally to claim even a smattering of it. In India, more than elsewhere, such a knowledge was absolutely necessary, because for many centuries caste and rural organisation of Indian society had moderated economic forces to a level where their operation was hardly perceptible to the public, and economics was unknown as a factor in commerce and industry. In England, on the other hand, there was nothing in the social organisation to limit the range of, or mitigate the rigor of economic forces, and their far-reaching consequences, affecting in various ways different classes, made for a study by the people of economics as a science, and economic knowledge has filtered down to many classes of the people. In the absence of a similar knowledge, the task is difficult of explaining those aspects of Indian currency which have been employed to the serious prejudice of Indian interests. Nevertheless, it has to be attempted so far as to enable them to understand the bearings of it on the varied processes of exploitation.

So long as India had an automatic currency, a currency, that is to say, which was governed by the usual law of demand and supply, there was little trouble. The demand for currency was met by an open mint which undertook to coin money out of silver offered, for the expenses of

making it. In the two decades commencing from 1872, there was a steady fall in the price of silver from 58*d*. to the oz. to 27*d*. in 1899, because silver was demonetised in most countries of Europe, and the silver thus rendered available by the melting down of European coins was thrown on the world market, and there was a gradual rise in the price of commodities resulting from the depreciation of silver. The sovereign that used to sell at Rs. 10 rose to Rs. 19, or nearly double its old silver value. This period of steady rise in Indian prices was of great advantage to European producers and exporters of Indian raw materials, for during the fairly long interval between the contract for supply and actual payment, the pound would rise in terms of the rupee, and the rise would go to the pockets of the exporters. A contract made for the supply of £1,000 worth of produce when the pound was at Rs. 17 would bring not only Rs. 17,000, but an addition of Rs. 500 if the pound had risen in the meanwhile to Rs. 17-8. This increase in the value of the pound encouraged also investments in India, for a rise in wages takes place usually long after a rise in prices, and in India the rise in wages takes much longer from its caste and rural economy. The increasing number of rupees which the pound would fetch encouraged investment. Where Rs. 75,000 was required to open an estate in India, £5,000 had to be sent at Rs. 15 to the pound, but

Fall of Silver

Exporters' Profits

at Rs. 16 to the pound only Rs. 4,687-10. What affected the exporter favourably would affect the importer adversely in proportion, but the importing firms in India in the earlier years had little to fear, because the rivalry of continental countries in the matter of Indian requirements had not developed to any serious extent during the two decades mentioned. Even during the years immediately before the War, 62 per cent. of imports to India were from England.

Investors' Advantage

This state of affairs could not long continue. The financial embarrassments of the Government to meet their sterling obligations were very great, and became greater year by year. With other countries of the West competing for the trade in import as well as in export, with the growing passion of India for articles of European manufacture, exchange could not be left any longer to the uncertainties incidental to the relation between gold and silver as regulated not only by supplies of these metals, but also by the changing tastes of man in regard to each. The obvious course, it may appear to us, and as it did appear to the Fowler Committee, was to follow European countries and demonetise silver. What was found good for these countries was certainly good for India. But the conversion of Europe to a gold standard had increased the demand for gold and raised its price, and India would have had to pay heavily for the yellow metal required for

The Fowler Committee

her vast trade. The system that was devised was the fixing of exchange at a certain figure, and maintaining it, as far as possible, at that position. The most convenient appeared to be at the time Rs. 15 for one pound, and it was fixed accordingly. But the sovereign at that time was at about Rs. 19, and the artificial value given to the rupee by making it exchangeable at Rs. 15 brought to the market silver hoards of the people to the value of several crores.

The Gold Exchange Standard

It need hardly be said that to fix the rupee at its artificial value of Rs. 15 and maintain it at the level, the mint had to be closed. Had the mint continued to coin rupees out of silver brought to it by the public, there would of course have been no fixed exchange at Rs. 15. The closing of the mint to free coinage left the Government a free hand to fix the dimensions of the currency of the country. In the absence of the banking habit of the people and of credit facilities, its policy was decisive, and practically the only factor, when credit had to be contracted or expanded. The rapid rise in prices in India dates from about the time the mint was closed, and continued until the other day much to the detriment of people with fixed incomes, and it is more than probable that the cause has been too often a superfluous addition to the available coinage. There is considerable temptation to do so, for there is a saving of as much as 5 annas to the Government each time a rupee is coined.

Closure of the Mint and Government Position

Had the rupee represented its full face value, any additions made in times of stringency would have, as they passed away, been melted down. But the silver value being below the face value by as much as 6 annas, any melting down of the rupee was impossible, and additions, made from time to time, swelled the stock of the circulating medium and raised prices. The enormous profits of coinage seem to have diminished the prudence and foresight of the Government.

Rising Price Level

The money so saved reached the colossal figure of £20 millions. According to all currency laws, the money should remain in the country, but in violation of them, it was transferred to London where it was advanced often as short-term loans to London capitalists at very low rates of interest ranging between 2 and 3 per cent. per annum. That service should have been available to Indians in preference, more specially because of the deficiency of Indian capital and its immobility.

Misuse of Reserves

The fact that exchange is no longer automatic makes the Indian currency a managed currency. Now currency is more or less managed in all countries, and no objection can be taken against management as such. But unlike European countries and America, the management does not rest with the people, but with the British who play the dual role of rulers of the country and exploiters. The duty that the British have as rulers is precisely the opposite of that which

they have as exploiters, traders and investors of capital in India, and it is easy to see which will go to the wall when these interests are in opposition. The objection is not therefore to a managed currency as such, but to the authority entrusted with the management.

The Real Objection

England no longer dominates Indian, much less, the world markets. So long as she dominated both, the objection to management by England was not very serious. But when other countries have entered into competition with England for raw materials and for Indian markets, it was a tremendous advantage which England enjoyed that Indian currency was in her control, and it was a temptation not easily resisted to make full use of it in a competition so close with formidable rivals as Germany and the United States, when failure to do so would have created embarrassments in British finance as a result of the fluctuations of the pound sterling. If this enormous loss was of India's, the gain was England's. To take the latest instance, the sterling reserves held by India in England remained a serious obstacle to England's return to the gold standard after the war. If the return took place before the sterling reserves were depleted, there would have followed a demand for conversion of the sterling reserves to gold. London has long enjoyed the proud privilege of being the centre of the money market, and that position was primarily due to the remarkable stability of her

India's Loss and England's Gain

currency, backed as it was by adequate reserves of gold. Any heavy liability would have diminished her storage of gold, and therefore her credit. The enormous purchases she has to make of wheat and cotton, her primary requirements, from the United States tend to alter the Dollar Sterling exchange against her. She has no power to alter any balance of trade against her that might arise as between countries of the West, or the colonies. But that power she has in regard to India, for she may so manage the currency of India that her stock of gold does not suffer any serious depletion to the detriment of the parity of her exchange with other countries, specially the United States. The all important consideration for England, a creditor country, is that her sterling should not depreciate, in other words, the gold backing of her currency should not in any way be impaired. When that contingency arose, the temptation for her to use the gold which was India's would be strong and, as a matter of fact, has seldom been resisted.

The denial of a gold currency and the transfer of the currency reserve to England have to be viewed in this light. But the temptation to annex India's gold for the maintenance of England's financial position did not stop there. Having fixed the Rupee at one shilling four pence, the British Government was bound to see that the rate was maintained, when the Rupee appreciated above that figure. It has to be admitted that when silver rose very high with reference to gold, as it did during the War, any

refusal to alter the rate would have raised insuperable difficulties. It is true that there were other ways than the one followed of meeting the situation but, suddenly faced with a crisis, it was excusable if the line which most of the continental countries took was followed in regard to India as well. But the statutory sanction, however, of the 2 shillings ratio in place of 1 shilling 4 pence, after the War was over, was indefensible. The War had been over then, and the demand for India's goods was bound to fall rapidly and would not have recovered until the belligerent countries recovered from their financial exhaustion, and following these later, the very first step that should have been taken was a return to the old ratio at the earliest opportunity. Instead of which, a two shilling ratio was fixed in the face of a divergence of as much as 7 annas 6 pies between the market price of a tola of gold and its price at 2 shilling ratio in the very month in which the ratio became effective. The various attempts to bolster up so impossible and so indefensible a ratio dissipated the huge reserves of India to the extent of 40 crores, disorganised her trade, and caused heavy losses to a large circle of traders and merchants who, on the assurance that Government would maintain the new ratio, had contracted for goods from abroad. If this enormous loss was India's, the gain was England's. For, the depletion of the gold and sterling reserves, belonging to India

Ditto after the War

but held in England, removed one of the serious obstacles to England's return to a gold standard, and there was no longer any sterling accumulations left for India to demand their conversion to gold on that return being effected.

We have now to turn to other aspects of exploitation. The rise of England to the position of the leading country in the world in point of industrial development was astonishingly rapid. As regards India, the progress was in the reverse direction, and was no less rapid. During the 150 years of British rule the disparity between the two countries became very great, and it has become so because England had developed her industrial greatness at the expense of India, or to the prejudice of her interest. For long she considered that what was good for her was good for India, little reflecting that, in point of industrial development, England and India were at opposite ends. England developed her industries on the basis of tariff walls. As early as the days of the Protector, the Navigation Act was passed to reserve to herself the coastal trade of England. When, however, she became supreme in the industrial field, and when the commerce of the world was carried for the most part in British bottoms and she had no close rivals, she could change over to free trade. For she had little to fear from competition, and much to gain from the free import of grain on which as an industrial country she had become gradually dependant. That policy was the last that should

Protection and Free Trade

have been applied to India in the condition of industrial backwardness India was in. The protection by tariff walls would alone have enabled Indian industries to be started and developed. This was deliberately not done to reduce India to the condition of a reservoir of raw materials and a market for finished products. It is only within recent years that England has adopted a less selfish policy towards India. In her own case, a policy of free trade has become no longer practicable as a result of the increasing competition of countries like America and Germany, and she could not help admitting that a similar change was necessary in the case of India. We may, therefore, hope for the gradual imposition of tariff walls in respect of infant Indian industries that require protection. Had that change in policy taken place earlier, the backwardness of India in respect of industries would not have been so great as it is to-day.

Instance of the Cotton Excise

Nowhere has the inwardness of English policy been so clearly seen as in the imposition of an excise duty on cotton goods manufactured in India, to set off the disadvantages that the Lancashire cotton manufacturers laboured under, in having to compete with a country which grew its own raw material. The rivalry between the two countries was in respect of only the coarser counts, which alone Indian mills could produce. The finer counts were still the monopoly of Lancashire, which was not threatened. The lower price, at which India could produce the coarser

counts, was by reason of the fact that she grew the coarse cotton herself, and thereby had no freight charges to incur either on the raw materials or on the finished product, as Lancashire had to do. Lancashire might as well have been penalised for the mill machinery manufactured in England itself, for which she had not to pay the heavy freight that India had to pay. Yet, at the bidding of Lancashire, was imposed a duty, opposed to every canon of fair play and every consideration of equitable taxation. Be it said to the credit of the Government of India that the tax was imposed in spite of its protests. Now that the tax has been abolished, be it acknowledged in grateful recognition that England has not been so lost to her sense of justice and fair play, as to perpetuate for long so serious an injustice to her dependancy.

The free trade policy did not only prevent new industries from springing up, but led existing ones to ruin and decay. In allowing some of these latter to disappear, there was not even the satisfaction that the gain was England's. The dyes used in India for colouring her fabrics were vegetable dyes, whose superiority over aniline dyes is acknowledged by all. The aniline dyes were of German origin and manufacture, and, in allowing them to supersede vegetable dyes England took away the occupation of a class, already poor and hard hit by the decay of the weaving industries, to enable German dyes manufacture to earn handsome dividends. The smelting industry was even more

Decay of Established Industries

deliberately killed. Scattered over the country, in localities rich in iron ore, may still be seen the remnants of hundreds of smelting furnaces. Both the iron and steel produced in India were of very high quality. The very interesting feature of the famous iron pillar at Delhi remaining free from rust for nearly 20 centuries has been explained only within the last few years. The so-called Damascus blade is the name given to Indian blades because they reached Europe *via* Damascus. In hardness and resilience, the steel of the Damascus blade is still unmatched. Crude and inefficient as the furnace may seem, the produce from it was of excellent quality, and yet, these furnaces in the part of the country the author comes from, were penalised by the imposition of Rs. 20 per furnace, with the result that they were abandoned as no longer profitable.

There are several industries which have decayed and disappeared because Western influence has altered habits and tastes. This does not properly come under exploitation, but the effect is practically the same. The introduction of Kerosine has necessitated the use of Kerosine lamps which are imported in large numbers. Brass lamps locally manufactured have been replaced by them. The replacement of brass vessels by aluminium and enamelled vessels of tin has affected the industry still more.

A Few, due to Change of Taste

We may now refer to the extinction of Indian shipping. It has now been established

beyond doubt that Indians had built large ships from very early times, and that they carried on a world-wide trade in them. The pictures of ships on slabs in temples in Java show that they were as large as the largest during Nelson's time. Till the advent of the European in Eastern seas, the trade with Africa, China and the Asiatic archipelago was by means of Indian ships built and manned by Indians. This world-wide shipping ceased with the piracy of European adventurers and companies. The coasting trade was appropriated by the British, so much so that, but for small craft of about 100 tons or so, there is practically no Indian shipping. The British Companies, into whose hands the business has passed, have resorted to the most unjustifiable methods in repressing attempts at revival. It is only within the last decade that the Indian Government have begun to recognise that India has a right to have the coastal trade all to herself, but the recognition has yet to be followed by efforts to restore to Indians a legitimate right.

Ruin of Indian Shipping

These are the various lines on which exploitation has proceeded, and is proceeding in India. The capital invested by England is worked for the most part by Englishmen themselves, who do not employ Indians to more responsible posts than of clerks and accountants. Other countries of the world seek only capital, not the capitalists. Indians alone import both, with the result that,

Capitalists beside Capital

whereas other countries pay no more than 4 or 5 per cent. on the capital they borrow for national requirements, India pays interest in the form of dividends which vary between 12 to 150 per cent., and in the shape of salaries earned by the European officers of the firms.

It is often said in reply to criticism by Indians that the European capitalists in India help by their example to educate the Indian in methods of organisation and the exploitation of national resources. That this is not so is a matter of fact, for Indians are not advanced to responsible posts in the firms. Even if that be so, it is a most expensive education. The policy, which has for its object the industrial regeneration of India, should have been on wholly different lines. It should have commenced with primary education, co-operation and organisation of credit so as to render money available in India, especially in rural parts, at low rates of interest. It should have prevented the decay of existing industries by improvement on modern lines in respect of organisation and marketing and technique, and it should have fostered the growth of selected industries with reference to the facilities of production and Indian requirements, and, as industries developed, it should have provided for opportunities for technological education and for research. The policy of the British Government naturally halting and hesitating, if not jealous, has begun at the wrong end. Such opportunities for research as have been provided were provided

when there were no problems for research developed as a result of industrial advance. It was forgotten that research is more a consequence than a cause of industrial advance. Co-operative credit came only in the 20th century where it should have been introduced in the 19th century, and at best it is only for short-term credit and leaves untouched the problem of rural indebtedness, 618 crores at a conservative estimate. Primary education is still far behind the requirements of the country. Credit is still so unorganised that, in the rural parts, interest from 18 to 36 per cent. has to be paid on loans. Against these conditions, so unfavourable, very little advance can be made. The foreign capitalist will continue to have his field clear and unhampered so long as in these respects India is where she is to-day, and the educational value, such as there is, of the example set by the European merchant, trader and manufacturer will be lost to Indians except for an infinitesimal few. Meanwhile, poverty will increase and affect an increasingly large section of the population to the detriment of the vitality and material prosperity of the people as a whole.

The Cart before the Horse

What has influenced England in this fatuous policy is the apprehension that given the requisite facilities of industrial advance, India would, with the enormous resources of raw materials and cheap labour at her command, soon supply her own needs, and England would lose an important market for her goods. Far

from that eventuality, the increase of wealth of the country would have raised her standard of living, and multiplied her wants. An increase of one rupee per head in the consumption of goods would have increased her requirements by as much as 32 crores, and England would certainly have had her share in that increase. Poverty and the lowering of the standard of life has the reverse effect, and what is still worse, when the people are sufficiently informed of the ultimate causes for that debasement, it would undermine the goodwill which the majority of the population still entertain towards England. No human ingenuity can isolate India from the tendencies and spirit of the times. The day is bound to come when manufactures and agriculture advance properly in a balanced scheme of development, though it may be put off. It is best the day dawns with England's assistance, rather than without it.

Right Lines of Policy

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20. OVER-POPULATION

Increase not Disproportionate—Emigration not Possible—Lower Standards of Life—Race Deterioration—Higher Fecundity and Mortality—Puerperal Mortality—Widowhood and Indifference to Life—Moral Prostration—Force of Mechanical Custom—Place of Famines—Failure of Social Reformers—The "S" curve—Reform and Legislation—Alternative of Contraception.

IN describing the lines of exploitation and its consequences, it is not implied by any means that it is the sole factor that has been at work in bringing India to its present unfortunate position. There have been other factors, and of these, over-population is by far the most important. The Census of 1931 revealed an increase of nearly 30 millions or an average of three millions a year. Even this increase is not by any means abnormal for a population which numbered 321 millions 10 years ago. Taking the average of 50 years, the increase per year is only little over a million and half. Even accepting the average per year of the last decennium, the increase is nothing abnormal, compared with countries outside Western Europe, where restraint on reproduction has arisen during the last decade or two, mainly as a result of the high standard

Increase not Disproportionate

of living. No country can expect any voluntary check on the growth of population until the conditions approximate more to those of Western Europe. Other countries will take long to reach that stage, and till then will continue to show a fairly uniform rate of growth. Indians need not, therefore, be blamed for an increase in their numbers which is less than normal. A prosperous population in health and vigour should be able to show a more rapid increase than has been evidenced by the Indian Censuses. But comparisons of this kind, however helpful in softening criticism, are out of place in judging the growth of population of any country. The increase has to be judged from the standpoint of the existing resources of the country, and judged by this test, there can be no question that the Indian population is fast multiplying, if it has not already multiplied, far beyond the means of subsistence.

There are no more than 300 millions of cultivated area, *i.e.*, less than an acre per individual of the 350 millions. The extent of cultivated area required for every European in the West is 2·3 acres. Allowing only one acre for the Indian, he has less than one acre to his share, and this fraction would be reduced still further if an annual increase of no more than one million is maintained in future. There is not much of cultivable land to be brought under the plough to keep pace with the rapid increase. Irrigation may bring 20 millions of acres more under cultivation, but that will

take years. There are no prospects of migration from province to province. Assam is the only province which may be able to absorb about the same number of inhabitants as it has at present. To Burmans the Indians are already unwelcome. In most other provinces, there is not enough land to make room for the normal increase of population within their own boundaries, let alone for outsiders. The prospect of migration abroad is equally dark. Except as indentured labourers, Indians are not welcome to any country dominated by the Europeans, and of those not under their control, China and Japan cannot be thought of. There is Brazil to which the Japanese are migrating. It is doubtful if Indians also can get a footing there. Even if the country is thrown open to them, no substantial relief can be obtained from migration, unless the numbers reach a million a year. The transference to a distant country of so large a number each year is, from the standpoint of cost alone, far beyond practical politics.

Emigration not Possible

Unless, therefore, checks are imposed on this increase, the people of India are faced with the certain prospect of having less and less to share out of the yield from land, and of being reduced to lower levels of subsistence than the unconscionably low level it has reached already in respect of many millions.

Lower Standards of Life

Race deterioration is bound to follow. Indeed, it has already set in. The average expectation of life

in India is showing unmistakably a downward tendency. From 24·59 in 1891 it has in the course of 20 years been reduced to 22·59 for males, and for females from 25·54 to 23·31. In England, on the other hand, during the same period it showed an upward tendency and is now over double of what it is in India. It means that men are cut off at a time of life when their long experience and mature judgment would be of the highest value to the country. The premature deaths of Gokhale, Krishnaswamy Iyer and C. R. Das will be readily recalled.

Race Deterioration

Every symptom is of a vast disease pervading every part of India's vast population. It is commonly believed that the high fecundity of the people will make up for the loss by death. The crude birth-rate for India was 38·57 per thousand against 24·4 in England and Wales in 1911. No satisfaction could be derived from this circumstance of a higher fecundity, because the births in the number of married females *is 196 in England and Wales against 128 for India. The Animists and Muhammadans who are not addicted to child marriage are more prolific than the Hindus. The Animists of Chota Nagpur increased by as much as 14 per cent. in 1901-11, while the rest of the population in the province, mostly Hindus, increased scarcely 3 per cent. The Muhammadans as a whole increased by 6·7 per cent. in the same decennium, while the Hindus increased only by 5 per cent. It would appear from these

Higher Fecundity and Mortality

facts that premature maternity has other consequences than an early exhaustion of vitality. It appears to fall heavily on the offspring. In Bengal, of the infants under one year as many as 270 die per 1,000, and 50 per cent. of this number are accounted for by premature birth or debility at birth. We are apt to infer that so high a mortality is due to the insanitary conditions and inadequate medical aid at child birth. A number may be thus accounted for, but the best of sanitary conditions and medical aid cannot save children whose vitality is at the lowest. Weak and not full grown herself, the mother cannot nourish adequately the child in the womb.

Puerperal Mortality

The condition of the woman of reproductive ages is far from satisfactory. Mr. Blunt, Census Commissioner for the United Provinces for 1911, collected statistics to show that on an average the ratio of female deaths at 15—30 to 1,000 births is never less than 60. In Bengal, while between the ages of 5—15 the average number of female deaths per thousand male deaths is 749, between 15—30 the mortality is as high as 1,198. The following Table gives the figures for other provinces:

Province.	Average number of female deaths per 1,000 male deaths between 5-15.	Average number of female deaths per 1,000 male deaths between 15-30.
Bihar and Orissa	799	951
Bombay	970	1,043
Burma	858	862
C. P. and Berar	881	1,100
Madras	923	1,232
Punjab	1,055	1,010
U. P.	897	1,080

We have the following in the All-India Census Report for 1901 (p. 118): "The evil effects of early marriage on female life are clearly shown by a comparison of the proportion of females to males who are living at the age of 10—15 in each province with the proportion of females of that age who are married. In Burma, practically no girls of the age in question are married and this is the part of India where the proportion of females at this age is highest compared with the proportion at all ages. The second place in this respect is shared by Madras and the Punjab where girls of this age are less frequently married than in any other part of India outside Burma, while Bengal where child marriage is most common stands at the bottom of the list. It may therefore be said that the proportion of the females at the ages 10—15 varies inversely with the number who are married at this period of life." This conclusion has been tested by reference to the figures for 1911 and has been found generally correct. The author of the Punjab Census Report for 1911 writes in a similar strain: "It has been shown that the castes which practise early marriage on an extensive scale have generally a small proportion of females at the age-period 12—15. Inquiries into a large number of cases show that where the marriage of young people is consummated at an early age, a fairly large percentage of wives die of phthisis or of some other disease of respiratory organs or some ovarian complication within

10 years of the consummation of the marriage."

These statistics are of very grave significance. There is no aspect of them which is reassuring, whether in point of increase of population or on the mortality* among women of reproductive ages or among infants. They are eloquent, on the other hand, of a deterioration which has already set in from all directions. Apart from the weakening of the people and the lowering of their stamina, there are many unwholesome mental reactions. The women of reproductive ages have to bear greater anxieties during their pregnancy, for they are more uncertain of survival, and the deaths of many of their children must cast a gloom on their lives which make their existence less and less supportable, and if that effect does not follow, the other alternative would be an indifference to life which is even more unwholesome in its effects. The very large number of widows is another important factor contributing to mental depression, more especially among the Hindus. There are 26 millions † of them in India, *i.e.*, over one family in every three has a widow. The presence of these in the household and their desolation darkens the lives of the rest. On the poor families there is already the infliction of poverty; add to it the infliction of suffering from the loss of dear ones, there is a load on existence

Widowhood and Indifference to Life

* The Census Report for 1931 only reinforces the conclusion. Reference may be made to Pp. 96-97 of Vol. I.

† In 1931, the figure was 155 per 1,000.

which makes life nearly unendurable and robs it of a great deal of attractiveness and joy. What is dearest and most precious being lost to them, they become indifferent to their other positions. The worst of sufferings endured, those of less poignancy are more easily endured or indifferently submitted to. The innate resistances of a vigorous and happy life to all that encumber or distort its free and unfettered expression disappear, and the people bend down before forces which, in a happier frame of mind, they might have fought against. The hold of customs becomes greater and society tends to become more and more mechanical, driven by it to lower depths of physical and mental prostration.

Moral Prostration

People may be found dying like flies in villages and towns from cholera and yet refusing to be persuaded to take the elementary precautions suggested by the Sanitary Officers. In a household, inmates numbering 18 did not move after repeated rat-falls. Every one of the 18 knew the relation between rat-fall and plague. They had been born and bred up in their town, which had been for more than two decades plague-stricken, and yet, they did not move and no less than 17 died. Cases like this might be cited by the score where, even with the full knowledge of their value, sanitary precautions have been neglected. It is not ignorance, not stupidity, but moral prostration arising from the growing indifference to life.

We are apt to draw from the circumstance of a persistent increase in the population that it

must be fairly prosperous. We forget, however, in doing so to make any allowance for the hold on it of unrelaxing custom. The Joint family, early marriage, and the exclusion of women from inheritance are at the bottom of the phenomenon and unless these customs change, this result is bound to follow. The Joint family is an institution by itself capable of maintaining the increase of population unaffected by economic distress. The father marries the son before the latter is able to support his wife with his own earnings. Economic factors do not therefore help much to postpone marriage. They are more effective when the newly married couple have to leave the parental roof to set up a house of their own as in the West. With the rise in the standard of life there, men have to postpone marriage for long until they are able to support a wife and family in comfort, or they have to avoid marriage and remain single. In India, the break-up of the Joint family has not proceeded far enough for the father to leave it to the son to decide the time of his marriage, or for the son to feel that the support of his wife should be his own concern. Indian society has now become almost mechanical. It is more like a plant than an animal, stationary, less sensitive, less responsive and less adaptive to change in surroundings. More than 90 per cent. work in villages and the sequestered life there, its even tenor, robbed now of even those few amenities it had in the past, is in itself a circumstance which makes for the persistence of

Force of Mechanical Custom

custom. Even the excitement of festivals and fairs is now inadequate to rouse energies long left untapped, and rural folk, on return from them, lapse back into the wearisome monotony of rural life.

Place of Famines

One is tempted to look to famines and pestilence to reduce the population to the normal level. Six millions are said to have been wiped out in 1918, and the Census figures for 1911-21 showed a perceptible fall in the normal increase. Famines there have been which decimated the population in several tracts of the country, and yet these have failed to effect any substantial decrease. Even if these dreadful visitations were effective factors, their effect on the morals of the people is too disastrous for one to contemplate the prospect. Famines, further more, would fail to remove the root cause.

Failure of Social Reformers

Social reform movements have failed even to ruffle the surface of Indian society. Census Commissioners have failed to note any perceptible effect of it worthy of mention in their reports. An intellectual appreciation of the gravity of the social evils is looked upon too often by reformers as adequate to get people to do away with them. They are, however, too deep rooted in religious beliefs and traditional usages to be so easily dealt with. Reformers themselves, eloquent on platforms, have often failed to discard customs which they condemned vigorously. An America-returned Brahmin, who saw nothing good in

his caste and condemned it as a whole in unmeasured terms, married his daughter before she was scarcely eleven to the astonishment of his many friends. Many cases like this could be cited.

To persistence of custom, hopelessly out of date and regardless of changed conditions, we should attribute the growth of Indian population. The growth of population usually follows an "S" curve. In the earlier stages of settlement of a people, when the environment is little under control, when there are hostilities, feuds, fights and wars, the number does not increase, and the growth follows the lower end of the curve. But when the people have more time for productive effort and the environment has been in a fair degree mastered, the increase is rapid and numbers shoot up. That stage lasts fairly long, but when it is reached and production comes to a standstill from the absence of fresh opportunities or from degeneration, the population tends to be stationary in point of numbers, and the curve follows the upper limb of "S". That is the stage at which India really is. Production has not increased appreciably. But the number of mouths have increased and statistics are eloquent of the reduction in the share of each, and the increase in population should have gradually fallen off. The increase is there and it can only be explained by the persistence of customs wholly out of date. The high mortality of infants and of women of reproductive ages

The "S" Curve

show that the stamina of the people is lowering.

Custom cannot long avoid or postpone the checks of nature. Not all the sanitary precautions in the world can prevent mortality due more to inborn weakness than to insanitation, and it will not be long before decimation sets in either by famine or epidemics, or both.

Whether over-government, under-government or self-government, the responsibility rests on the people themselves to take steps, before it is too late, to bring into the country no more than they can adequately support. They have to raise the marriageable age of girls to a much higher figure than it is at present. They have to do it not only for reducing the number of offsprings but also for the health and vigour of the women and their children. The statistics given cry aloud for such a reform. But no reform can be effected unless resort is had to drastic legislation. Laws passed to make marriages permissible only beyond a certain age by themselves would not suffice. Concurrently with them must be brought into operation laws against customs, of which early marriage is the direct consequence. Unless wives are given the right to a share in the husband's property, divorce allowed and monogamy enforced at the same time, legislation is likely to prove infructuous.

Reform and Legislation

If people set their face against legislation of this comprehensiveness, the only alternative left is

Alternative of Contraception

contraception. It is a method which may be considered to do violence to certain sentiments of the Hindus. In marrying early, forcing motherhood on girl-wives to the ruin of their constitution and the stamina and vitality of their children, and in submitting to hardships and privations arising from insufficient means of support, there is far greater violation of virtues which are among the cardinal principles of Hindu civilisation. The due discharge of the many obligations to parents, brothers, sisters, wife and children is among the primary duties of the Hindu householder, and how can these be discharged satisfactorily, if there are too many procreated, predisposed to disease from inherited weakness and from insufficient care? Indians have to choose the lesser of the two evils. If they want to cling to customs which are an anachronism, the whole fabric of Indian civilisation would be threatened with collapse. If, on the other hand, by contraception or late marriages or by both, children are not brought into the world who cannot be reared in health and comfort, and if mothers are not weakened by early and frequent child bearing, there is yet a chance for Indian civilisation to survive, and for the people to rise to a higher level of physical and mental vigour.

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21. POVERTY

Persistence of a Myth—Early Glimpses of the Truth—Warnings Unheeded—Careful Investigation—Loss of Employment Avenues—The Pressure on Land—Contrast with China—Real Reason for Fragmentation—Limits to Scientific Methods—The Cow-dung Cakes—Rate of Interest—Custom lost of Grain Reserve—Agricultural Departments Helpless—Mechanised Agriculture in the West—The Menace of Foreign Grain—Grave Situation—The Land Tax—An Untenable Theory—Inexorable Collections—Periodical Set Backs—Iniquity—Effect on Standard of Life—Agriculturists and Gold Absorption—Indebtedness and Selling at Disadvantage—Chronic Poverty Assisted by Climate—Malnutrition—Lowered Vitality—Predominance of Agriculture—Industry—Utter Helplessness.

INDIA was so fabulously rich in the past that no country could compare with her. Throughout the world she was looked upon as the country which had no equal in regard to her magnificence and wealth. The European adventurers and explorers of the 15th and 16th centuries were bent on the discovery of a route to India by sea, and discovered the countries of the New

World by accident. To Shakespeare the Field of the Cloth of Gold appeared to make England India. This view of India as the Land of Plenty has passed into a tradition, so much so that the world finds it hard to believe that India is no longer the land flowing with milk and honey in spite of frequent famines, and in spite of numerous other evidences, and there is much in India to-day to nurse and keep up that delusion. The abundance of tropical vegetation, the sunshine, the display of colours in the different dresses of varying nationalities, the beautiful decorations, and the magnificent processions of the Rajas and Maharajas are evidences to the traveller who hurries through the cities of British India and the capitals of the Princes but avoids the humble villages, that India still is the land of wealth and magnificence; yet, had the same traveller included a village in his itinerary and stayed but a few hours to look round, and had he looked at the faces of the interested group that gathered round him, most of them hungry, emaciated, and with torn clothing, meek and humble beyond words, and had he but put to them a few questions about their welfare, he should have found that, in spite of all the impression of plenty, there was starvation, distress and disease on a scale such as he had never before associated with any country in the world. But what does he care for the humanity of India? He came out to see the Taj, the sunset on the Himalayas, to meet the European merchant

Persistence of a Myth

princes and Indian princes, to see the temple at Kalighat, and to declare in his own country to his circle of admiring friends that he had seen India. So, in spite of numerous travellers that pass through India, that old tradition survives, and Indian poverty is a myth to the foreigners, because they have not seen, and a myth to the resident Europeans, because they will not see.

Early Glimpses of the Truth

Indian poverty is the most distressing fact now about India. It has been so for several decades. As early as the eighties of the last century, no less an authority than Sir William Hunter had declared that 40 millions of the 250 millions of India did not know what it was to have a full meal. Not long after, Lord Cromer (then Sir Evelyn Bearing) estimated the annual average income of the Indians at the low figure of Rs. 27 per annum. For several years afterwards there was no authoritative pronouncement on Indian poverty except from Indian politicians who, from Dadabhoy Nowroji downwards, have cried themselves hoarse that far too great a proportion of the population are in a condition of semi-starvation.

Warnings Unheeded

These warnings were unheeded. Even the warning of the famines was for long neglected. When the frequency of famines was pointed out as the result of poverty, it was said that famines were inevitable in India, and that even in the days of plenty, as for example the times

of Akbar, there were famines. Except for a famine trust created and famine operations being regularised under a famine code, no measures were taken which had for their object the prevention of the dire calamity.

Careful Investigation

It was not till the 20th century that Indian poverty was made the subject of careful investigation by Officers of the Agriculture and Education Departments during their leisure hours. Dr. Mann and his Indian collaborators led the way, and the exhaustive enquiry they made into the condition of a typical Deccan village, Pimpla by name, revealed a state of affairs almost alarming. The following passage from the concluding chapter of their report may be cited:

"Out of 103 families investigated, of the village Pimpla Soudagar, 35 per cent. can pay their way in the standard they themselves lay down. The others are living below that standard, and this conclusion, which seems very clear, forms an exceedingly serious state of affairs". Major Jack's enquiries, conducted during the period 1910-14 into the economic condition of Faridpur District, showed that out of a population of 1,861,183, just 50 per cent. (951,205) were living in comfort. The results of intensive surveys in other parts of India have revealed conditions as appalling.

India was not, like America or Australia or Africa, inhabited by wild tribes with her natural resources wholly undeveloped, where therefore exploitation did not necessarily involve any serious disturbance to tribal economy, except where the

White settlers ventured to annex the labour power of the tribes.

The economic studies made by other investigators as Dr. Jevons of Allahabad, Dr. Slater in South India and by other agencies, as the Chanakya Society of the Patna College, have yielded results which are by no means assuring.

Loss of Employment Avenues

A little reflection will show that these investigations could not have revealed a better picture. It is the consequence of the various processes of exploitation. The importation of foreign cloth, reaching now the total of 66* crores, is some indication of the very large proportion of people which the weaving industry must have supported during the days when India produced not only her requirements, but supplied the markets of the world. An industry on so large a scale must have involved the employment, in industries subordinate to weaving such as spinning, carding, bleaching and dyeing, of many hundreds of thousands. The thousands who were supported by the smelting of iron, the manufacture of steel, of the instruments and implements both of iron and steel, have similarly had to resort to agriculture. The military profession, in which many hundreds of thousands had to be engaged to carry on the wars between the numerous chieftaincies, kingdoms and empires, is now gone, except for the 1,50,000 serving as

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* This figure has come down in recent years, as is well known, due to a variety of causes.

ordinary soldiers under the British and the Indian princes, and these had likewise to turn to agriculture. The profits from export and import trades go largely to European pockets. The profits from the carrying trade, whether by railways or by ships, go similarly out of the country. Waterways were numerous in the Gangetic plains and along the coast where they existed, and the transport of goods along these gave occupation to many lakhs of people. The introduction of railways has practically extinguished this trade, and diverted those engaged in it to other walks of life. But a fraction of the profits, which European companies are able to earn out of the raw materials they sell abroad, reaches the Indian. The rest is interrupted by the European middleman. While the flow of wealth from abroad into the country might have been much greater than it is, the agricultural wealth has to be shared by a much larger percentage of the population.

The number that have taken to cultivation is so great, and land available for cultivation is so little, that the size of holdings has rapidly decreased in all parts of the country. The average size of a farm in India is 4 acres. In dry land tracts, it varies from 6 to 10, in wet it is as low as 2 acres or even less. For wet land cultivation, the minimum size of an economic holding is 12 acres, and for dry land the size has to be at least 40 acres. Any holding of a lesser size cannot be worked economically. The average for the whole of India of four acres includes both

The Pressure on Land

dry and wet. Furthermore, under the security of life and property enjoyed under British rule, the population has multiplied to 352 millions.

It is very nearly the saturation point. The increase in the period covered by the Census of 1921 was very small compared with previous decades. Although the influenza wave of 1918 accounted for no less than six millions of deaths, the influence of factors like the absence of opportunities for emigration, and the absence of areas to be newly opened up cannot be eliminated. Except in Japan and China, nowhere in the world is the pressure of population so heavy on land.

Contrast with China

Now the holdings in Japan and China are, on the average, smaller in area. But the most intensive cultivation of these countries, under which half an acre is made to yield as much as 4 acres in other countries considered agriculturally advanced, is a feature of Chinese agriculture that dates back many centuries, and is based on habits and practices which, however sound in themselves, are repugnant to the people of the rest of the world. In India, the cultivation, of attenuated holdings is a feature that has grown up within the last century, and methods of cultivation, developed and followed through several centuries, are based on the assumption of holdings of sufficient size. The adjustments demanded by the new conditions have not yet been effected, and are not likely to be effected for many years. In the meantime, holdings are fast diminishing in size under the increasing pressure of an over-grown population.

Now, it may be said that it is foolish to allow farms to fall below the economic size. That is true, but economics alone do not govern considerations of the kind. Only the possession of land gives social standing in a pre-eminently agricultural country, and land is the only form of investment which could not be easily disposed of at the bidding of a passing impulse, or on the occasion of a sudden necessity. The people hold fast to their land, in spite of the fact that it is of much too small a size, because in the stress of poverty, disposal may lead to the expenditure of the whole of the sale proceeds, and leave nothing to fall back upon. In the old days, when alternative employments were not scarce as now, there were customs such as the auctioning of the family property among the members of the family and some taking the money, they could get from their brothers, for investment in business. That practice indicates that it is not foolishness, but dire necessity which drives them to sub-divide land beyond the economic unit. Had the family held together and undertaken joint cultivation as in the past, the difficulty of the situation could have been eased. But the inadequacy of the family income has made for jealousies between the members, and the individualism of British administration and Western education has been sufficient to make short work in many families of the virtues, the surrenders and the effacements of the Joint family.

Real Reason for Fragmentation

We may console ourselves with the reflection that scientific agriculture would save the situation. It may carry India a long way in the matter of agricultural improvements, but there are certain definite limitations to the assistance it can render. In the first place, scientific agriculture, as it is commonly understood, is of Western origin, and has grown and developed with reference to conditions which are very different from those of India. The profit, that a farmer with the application of scientific methods can earn, is substantial enough to tempt him to follow them when his farm is 50 or 60 acres. But, where a farm is scarcely one-tenth of that size and consists usually of widely scattered fragments, the increase in profit is so small that the farmer thinks it hardly worth while to take the trouble. The smallness of size, however, does not exclude the use of improved manures and improved varieties of seeds, and such tillage as can be done by hand or hand implements. As regards manure, however, the difficulty is that the average farmer has seldom any capital to invest in it. His income hardly suffices for his bare existence.

Limits to Scientific Methods

The best manure to use is cow-dung. But a considerable portion of it is used in place of firewood. This may seem folly on the part of the Indian farmer. He realises, as much as the agricultural expert, that he is diverting to less useful purpose what should go to his land, but he is helpless. The strict regulations of the

The Cow-dung Cakes

Forest Department have made firewood costly or difficult to obtain. In the old days, he could cut wood from the neighbouring forest or jungle, and he had not to spend anything. Now, he has to pay for cutting firewood, and the regulations of the Forest Department have rendered difficult the grazing of his cattle. Fees have to be paid for each animal in addition to *mamools*. Lands reserved for grazing in the village have been either partially or wholly made over for cultivation.

Nor can capital be had on easy rates of interest. It is notorious that the disparity in interest between the town and the country has remained very great for decades. Whereas in towns money can be had at 8 or 10 per cent., in rural parts interest varying from 12 to 36 per cent. has to be paid. The lowest rate of interest is on the security of gold or silver in the form of jewellery. One reason for the passion for jewellery, noted by foreign observers, is the facility of raising loans on them. It must be remembered that there are no banks in rural parts, and a low literacy of no more than 7 per cent. does not permit (8 per cent. in 1931; but low in rural parts) of the appreciation of banking facilities or their correct utilisation; the ryot is therefore wise in having ready at hand securities in the one form in which the lowest rate of interest can be obtained. This, of course, is open only to the more well-to-do among the farmers.

Rate of Interest

The average size of holding being so low, it is obvious that a very large number must be

below the size of the average. In these cases, the holding is so small that the farmer gets very little more than the wages for his labour, and even this is to be doubted. For the money required on investments, on improved implements and manure, etc., there must be a surplus after meeting the labour charges and household expenditure of the farmer, and that surplus does not exist in the case of a majority of Indian holdings. Even then, those who have but a small surplus cannot afford to utilise it in this way in tracts of the country with deficient or erratic rainfall, for the reason that they have to keep it in reserve against lean years, which are only too frequent. In dry land tracts, it is considered a wise provision to have a reserve of grain for at least five years. Far too many holdings in these tracts do not give returns sufficient to enable their owners to keep this reserve. The rainfall is far too often insufficient, erratic or untimely, and the capital invested on manure may not be recovered in the same year. As a matter of fact, the habit of keeping a reserve is fast disappearing from the people, because conversion to cash has become easy, money economy having replaced a commodity economy, and money, being liquid, is easily spent away.

Custom lost of Grain Reserve

The Agricultural Departments can make but too slow a headway against conditions briefly indicated above for them to produce permanent results. Their efforts should increase production to an extent that will leave a substantial margin

after meeting the requirements of the yearly addition to the population of nearly three millions. Anything short of that would fail to improve the standard of living. Unless the standard rises, the stimulus to greater exertion is not likely to come. It need hardly be said that it is extremely difficult for the Departments to effect annually so substantial an improvement in agricultural production as to visibly affect for the better the standard of living, and, at the same time, provide for three million more mouths.

Agricultural Departments Helpless

If the conditions, briefly indicated above, are not conducive to rapid agricultural improvement, it is rendered more difficult by the revolution in agriculture taking place in the New World and in Russia. Both in the United States of America and Canada, there is proceeding apace a mechanisation of agriculture with reference to a number of staple crops. The horse agriculture is being rapidly replaced by tractor agriculture, and farms of 70 to 80 acres, once considered sufficient, are now giving place to large holdings reaching as many as a thousand or more acres to meet the larger requirements of the tractor. Horses are disappearing, and the land reserved for raising food for them is broken up for raising wheat and other crops, and the small farms, unable to stand competition with these large farms, are absorbed by the latter. With the large machinery employed to suit the larger area of these farms, production costs are less and the yield is much larger. That is the main reason

Mechanised Agriculture in the West

why American wheat sells cheaper in India, and India has had to put a tariff on imported wheat. It is wheat now; before long, it will be American rice which sells now cheap already in China and Japan. As if this menace is not serious enough, Russia has started what is called "The Five Year Plan" under which agriculture is being carried on on the same large scale as in America. Russian wheat may therefore compete with American wheat for a market in India. We shall have then two of the most important crops in India raised abroad and sold cheaper at her own doors. If this should happen on any large scale, the rural economy of India, long adjusted to the labour requirements of these two crops, would be upset, and serious dislocations would ensue.

The Menace of Foreign Grain

We are apt to consider that a tariff on the imported wheat and rice would efficiently prevent competition with the home-grown produce. So it would. But a permanent tariff of this description on what is the main food of the vast populations of India would raise the cost of living, and the prices of other articles would sympathetically rise, and the West would gain another advantage over the East. For, the advantageous position it has now is on a basis of low producing costs in spite of high wages. When wages fall as a result of low prices of wheat and rice, producing costs would reach even lower levels, and the West would have a greater advantage in the competition, not with reference to these two staple articles of food alone, but also in regard to other articles whose production

is likely to become cheaper. If this menace proves real, not all the resources of the Agricultural Departments would be of any avail.

We see thus that the progress of scientific agriculture in India would not depend on the wholesale or indiscriminate adoption of methods of the West, or even an adaptation of it to Indian conditions, and a development of this kind will take long. Nor can co-operation in farming, in respect of machinery, be developed easily in a country where the instinct of co-operation has practically been wiped out by British individualism. It would be a laborious process, involving spread of literacy and propaganda, to effect the transition from the present stage of integration of the individual to the stage where mutual suspicion and distrust is replaced by co-operation on definite lines of agricultural activity. Meanwhile, the movement is downwards of the Indian farming population to lower depths of poverty and distress, and the descent is arrested with great difficulty by the Agricultural Departments.

Grave Situation

The effect of taxation must now be considered. More than half of the revenues of India is derived from land. That is bound to be so in countries which are predominantly agricultural. Whether India need have remained predominantly agricultural is a different question. There is considerable reason to believe that it could have had an economy in which industries and agriculture were evenly balanced. Whether that view is correct or not, land-tax is

The Land-Tax

inevitable in a country in which the bulk of the income is derived from agriculture. The tax now levied on land would have been less heavy, had it been levied on the income derived from it.

In India, the land has been claimed by the British as the property of the State. There is no warrant for the theory in Hindu Law. Manu has declared that the land belongs to him who cleared the jungle. That is the natural and only reasonable view. But the Muhammadans claimed, for the first time, that the land belonged to the State, and the British have made a similar claim. In their own country, the land is still private property, and they are not prepared for so advanced a form of State socialism. However that may be, this theory justifies the claim of a State to a share in the unearned increment from land. The assessment is fixed for a period of 30 years each time, and, when there is what is called a resettlement, the assessment is enhanced by the unearned increment in the income which the land yields at the time. The assessment may be as high as half the net produce. There are so many considerations in fixing up the amount due, as the character of the land, its proximity to town, etc., but usually it does not work out in practice to that very high figure.

An Untenable Theory

The objection to the land-tax is not so much on the ground of heaviness, as to other incidents of it. The fixing of the assessment itself is a laborious and protracted process, in which the ryot is often victimised by petty officials. Once the

assessment is fixed, it is adhered to far too rigidly. The variations in the rainfall, in regard to the time of its receipt and amount, do not often allow a full crop to be raised, but too often no allowance is made for these factors which tell heavily on the yield. A reduction in the assessment is obtained with the greatest difficulty. As a matter of fact, Revenue Officers are discouraged from reporting deficiencies in the crops, which would involve a reduction in the Revenue demand. This inelasticity of the land-tax is one of its greatest defects. For, there may be several fields belonging to an individual, in which the return will not even repay the expenses of cultivation. In some fields, sowing might have been done several times, or crops might have been damaged by pests or diseases. It is very rarely that allowance is made for these, and the tax, on the basis of a full crop, is levied on the whole property, irrespective of the consideration that a full harvest is derived only from a fraction of the land. Often, parts of the holding are not cultivated at all, for want of grain, of labour, or from other causes. In spite of it, the assessment has to be paid on them as well.

Inexorable Collections

The second objection to the land-tax settlements is that they give a set-back to the people each time there is an increase. Thirty years is a sufficiently long interval for the people to effect a rise in the standard of their life corresponding to the increase in the income from land. When the standard has been so raised, and

people have become accustomed to it, there comes a set-back due to a heavy addition in the assessment. It is true that this is only the unearned increment, but this very unearned increment has, during previous years, been utilised in meeting the requirements of the standard of living growing higher, and the deprivation of it throws the people back by several years. It may be said in reply that the thirty years' limit was fixed with reference to the persistent demand of Indians that shorter periods failed to give the necessary stimulus to the cultivator to effect improvements, under the natural impression that he had but to effect improvements for the State to claim a share. As between shorter and longer periods, the advantage is clearly on the side of the latter. But it is only a choice of the lesser evil. The fact is a progressive land-tax, as levied in India, is highly objectionable, and makes for demoralisation, from the power it gives to petty officials, and from the set-back to which people are liable from time to time. If the land-tax is based on the income derived from it, and additions to the revenue are met from other sources, a part of the objection that there is now against the tax would disappear.

Periodical Set-backs

But the most serious objection would still remain. The majority of the holdings are now below the economic size. As has been stated, from most of these but barely the wages of the labours spent by the farmer and his family are obtained. To levy a tax on such holdings is cruel.

It is like levying a direct tax on the labourer. The three or four rupees that have to be paid is, under the circumstances, a very cruel exaction.

Iniquity

To forego the tax on these would, it must be admitted, be fatal to the revenues. The land so released from taxation would be far too great a proportion of the total under cultivation, and therefore, would diminish the land revenue by at least half of the present total. It is likely to be reduced still further by the temptation, to those who own farms of larger size, to cut their property into smaller holdings, and claim similar exemption. The remedy therefore does not lie that way. Till one is found, the land-tax will continue to press heavily on the poorest part of the population. How oppressive it is is evident from the fact that the gross return from a holding may not be more than Rs. 500, out of which deductions on account of tax alone may be as much as Rs. 10. Those who have incomes other than Agricultural of Rs. 2,000 or below per annum are exempt from all direct tax, whereas the poor farmer, who is hardly able to eke out his living on a gross return of no more than Rs. 500, has to pay a direct tax of about Rs. 10. The unfairness and absurdity of the arrangement is manifest. It is no argument to say that, land being the property of the State, rent must be paid. The point to be considered is not whether the property is private or the State's, but whether the tax is a cruel burden and can be reasonably levied, and there can be no two answers to the

question whether the poor labouring ryot has a right to be freed from the tax which is collected from him with inexorable regularity and exactitude.

The burden of taxation as a whole has increased from 1-18-9 in 1871 to 6-1-8 in 1922. Even assuming to be correct the estimate of Findlay Shirras of an average annual income of Rs. 116 per head of the population, which is higher than the estimate by Indian authorities, the percentage to be paid as tax is far too high. The argument ordinarily advanced that in Great Britain no less than 22--25 per cent. of the income is taken by the Government can delude only the ignorant. The point to stress in these calculations is what is left after the demands of the State are met. No economist will have the hardihood to assert that, even making allowance for a difference in standard of life, deduction of 5 per cent. from Rs. 116 would not tell more heavily on the Indian than a reduction of 23 per cent. from £67 (487 dollars per year) on the Englishman. Any demand of the State that tends to lower the reasonable standards of living is indefensible, and it is to be doubted whether there is not that effect on a good many of the poor farmers in India.

Effect on Standard of Life

The ryot in India is meeting the situation by a sacrifice in the standard of living and by indenting on his capital, if not by borrowing. The comforts and conveniences of the poorer among them are being sacrificed one after another. It

is a very mistaken view that the standard of living has improved among them. Enamelled ware, aluminium vessels and kerosine lamps of the West are to many unthinking people unmistakable signs of a higher standard of comfort. As a matter of fact, what these replaced were costly things to purchase and use. Enamelled or aluminium vessels are certainly cheaper than the brass vessels which are even now considered the right thing to use in Indian household. Kerosine lamps are cheap, compared to brass lamps of Indian make, and kerosine oil is much cheaper than castor or other heavy oils that were used in brass lamps. The reduction in the average consumption of cloth per head of the population is the most eloquent testimony to the growing poverty of the people. A reduction of that character may be a sign of higher standard in the West where the dress of women requires lesser and lesser lengths of cloth. But the rural folk in India are very far from these revolutions of taste in the West, and would be happy to have the same amount of cloth to which they have been long accustomed. The consumption that used to be 18 yards per year per head before the War is now reduced to 10 yards.

The enormous absorption of gold by India is another of the arguments brought forward to justify the wild assertion that poverty does not exist in India or is fast disappearing. To view aright the absorption, one has to go a little in detail to what is happening in India today. The fact has already been mentioned that uneconomic

holdings are fast on the increase in India. A fair proportion of these continue to be cultivated by their owners, more or less encumbered with debt, the poor farmers sacrificing what little comfort they were accustomed to, and foregoing the observance of many a thing held sacred. Sacrifices of this description do not suffice to set free the larger number from encumbrances, and the farms pass into the hands of classes who have wealth at their command, but who are interested in land as a suitable form of investment. On the one hand, there is growing a class of land-owners who are absentee landlords and live in towns, who let out lands on competitive rents, and on the other, a landless proletariat who were once owners but who have to rest content with the position of a rack-rented tenantry. The absorption of gold is by the land-owning classes who take advantage of the scramble for land and raise rents to the highest pitch. It is obvious that, however it may be, the amount is absorbed by the class who represent about 40 per cent. of the total population and share among them no less than 2/3 of the entire wealth of the country. The remaining 60 per cent., including among them the rack-rented tenants, the small proprietors and the landless labourers, are not the gainers by a single pie. The gold thus absorbed, it is declared, does not pass into general circulation but is hoarded. The impetus to production of wealth that there might have been from proper investment, and the contribution it might have

Agriculturists and Gold Absorption

made to the general welfare have not been possible, and the tenants and the labourers have, equally with the rest of society, to forego a share in the increased prosperity that might have resulted from their proper utilisation. The absorption of gold, in no way therefore, disproves the poverty of the bulk of the tenant and labouring sections of the agricultural population.

Indebtedness

It has already been pointed out that uneconomic holdings are for the most part heavily encumbered with debt, of which the total has been estimated variously at between Rs. 800 and 1,200 crores. This debt is not on the property alone, but is often on the crop itself, and if it is not, interest has to be deducted from the income of the farm. The *sahucar* or the middleman takes full advantage of the necessities of the ryot. The middleman goes round a few weeks before harvest, and advances money at high rates of interest to the ryot on a basis of very low prices of the crop, sometimes 20 to 30 per cent. below the price likely to prevail during harvest time. The ryot loses both ways in the shape of interest on the money and in the low price at which he is compelled to sell to the middleman. What is left after the deductions is very little indeed, far too often barely sufficient to meet the simple needs of the family.

And Selling at Disadvantage

Even in normal years of rainfall, large numbers belonging to this class and labourers are in a condition of semi-starvation. In years of

deficient or erratic rainfall, and these are becoming more frequent than in the past, distress is widespread and large numbers are thrown on relief works started by the Government. Where rains fail for a couple of years, famine is wide-spread, and in spite of organised relief on the part of the Government many thousands of lives might be lost. The 1877 famine was one of those terrible calamities which decimated the population, and caused sufferings to many thousands, which will not bear recital.

Chronic Poverty

In a tropical climate like that of India, people can be reduced without serious consequences to a level of subsistence much lower than what is required to keep body and soul together in colder climates. The exactions of climate from the body are far less, and little is required by way of recoupment. One can starve longer and oftener without untoward consequences in the tropics than in the colder countries. There are various fruits, tubers, roots, leaves, etc., available in their neighbourhood, on which people can feed as a last resort in case of dire necessity. On such in normal times many poor castes subsist in part. The distress and famine are in spite of these.

Assisted by Climate

The fact is, for many millions, variously estimated from 50 to 100 millions, there is very little margin between the scale of their subsistence and starvation, and but one unfavourable season may suffice to transfer them from one category to the other. The low subsistence level has told

heavily on the people. Insufficiency of food has reduced the vitality of many to so low a level that their resistance to diseases has diminished. The food is not only insufficient but is defective from the standpoint of the vital requirements of the body. Important enquiries and investigations carried on by Col. MacCarrison and Major Russell have shown that the food of many classes of the people is defective in vitamins, and in the proportion of proteid carbohydrates and fats. This was but to be expected. When food cannot be had in sufficient quantity, men are not likely to be particular about quality. Milk and curds, so universally used from the earliest times, is now a luxury of the well-to-do. In several parts of the country, proteid does not figure in sufficient proportion in the food. Meat is forbidden among many classes, and, where allowed, is too costly for frequent use. Leguminous seeds, which supply the nitrogen to the food of the vegetarian poor, are also becoming costly and therefore are used but little. The methods of preparation of the food deprive it to a great extent of what little vitamin there is. The result of all these is that malnutrition prevails among large classes of population to the further detriment of their vitality, and disease resistance, already seriously diminished by the insufficiency of food, is lowered further.

Malnutrition

It is causes such as these that brought about the loss of 6 millions of the population during the influenza epidemic of 1918. That was

an epidemic. Malaria is wide-spread and, being endemic in various parts of India, accounts for a million deaths annually, and those who survive the attack but harbour the parasite are many millions more, and the disease renders them weak, anaemic and incapable of hard exertion. Hookworm is even now widely prevalent. As many as 80 per cent. of the people examined in South India harbour the worm. On the effects on the constitution the disease produces, the indisposition to work, reduced vitality and generally an anaemic condition, so much has been written that the subject need not be pursued further. Suffice it to say that Indian poverty is so wide-spread that far too great a proportion of the people are reduced in vitality and become predisposed to disease for the population as a whole not to be affected as regards its morale, outlooks and ideals. If there is wide-spread depression in India and if Indians appear dispirited, it is in great part due to the poverty and low vitality of a large percentage of population,

Lowered Vitality

The conclusions reached above are mainly derived from a study of the agricultural conditions of the country. The industrial side has not been considered, because that aspect has hitherto had but little influence in relieving the poverty of the masses. The agricultural income is 15 times the income from manufactures, and agricultural workers number 108 millions as against a little over a million and a half, working in the factories subject to the Indian Factories Act. And this

Predominance of Agriculture

serious disproportion is very much increased by the fact that the capital employed in these factories is predominantly foreign, and the return from it to that extent goes abroad, and is not available to swell the national dividend. How insignificant has been the effect of industrial development may be judged from the progressive ruralisation of the people, as indicated by the increase in percentage of those dependent on agriculture from 59·8 per cent. in 1891 to 71·3 per cent. in 1921 and 73 per cent. in 1931. Neither the area under cultivation nor industry has kept pace with the increase in population.

The value of industrial development to India lies, in the present state of the country, as much in increasing the income per head of the people as in providing a diversity of occupation to mitigate the horrors of famine, and, what is of still greater importance, in producing greater intellectual vigour and stamina, a higher standard of living and a greater mobility of capital, and to allow these to exert wholesome reactions on agriculture. Europeans dominating most of the industries excepting the mill industry, these benefits are lost to India, for Indians have to play the subordinate role of labourers, mechanics and clerks, and therefore miss the invigorating influences of the power to direct and employ capital in profitable channels of production.

Industry

Indian poverty, but inadequately described above, will not disappear until agriculture improves and industries develop sufficiently to release land

from the enormous pressure of population it has to sustain now. Until that time comes, the inertia of a vast population, physically and morally prostrate, will remain presenting formidable obstacles to the progress of education and to the spread of useful knowledge in regard to health, sanitation and medicine. What is too often attributed to ignorance, fatalism or conservatism of the people is really the result of the sense of helplessness that has grown upon them from the elimination of all that invigorates and enlivens life from their environment. Far too many harbour diseases that enfeeble the frame. Food in sufficient quantity is not theirs. There are too many to diminish the fruits of their labours. They groan under a heavy load of debt. They have not the wherewithal to meet adequately the numerous obligations to parents, brothers and sisters which their religion enjoins on them. They are ignorant of the laws that have replaced their customs, and are too illiterate to understand them without the costly services of predatory lawyers. The sympathy of the nobility or the educated is unknown to them. To the rich landlord or zamindar, the amenities of town or city life are so attractive that rural environment is unthinkable. The educated classes have their vocations in towns and live in a world of their own, too far apart from that of rural folk and little in sympathy with them. Add to these the swarms of petty officials, armed with powers of the limits of which the rural folk are

Utter Helplessness

ignorant, and therefore tempted to levy exactions at every opportunity, we have a picture of the life of at least 100 millions in rural areas, and what equipment have they to meet the new conditions? The systematic repression of self is all that they know. It was all right in the old days when land was abundant and yielded in profusion, and there was plenty to enjoy and plenty to give. Without that bit in the mouth, self would have started with headlong speed on a mad career of indulgence and luxury that would have ruined character and stamina. It was wisdom to tether it to the Joint family and caste. The force of custom and of inherited aptitude sufficed to take it along the well-established routine of life. But now, the sanctions of caste and religion are not operative and new forces are threatening the individual from all sides, and the old formula has to be replaced by one in which intellect and will are the important terms, and that formula has yet to be found and applied in the preparation for life of the individual. Till then, the Indians will continue, as they have been for several decades, a prey to the forces that are surrounding them, resigned to their fate.

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22. EUROPEANS IN INDIA

Mistake to be Avoided—Settlers Necessarily Adventurers—From the 17th to 19th Century—A Very Powerful Minority—Connections with England—Aloofness from the Country—A Superior Order—In Earlier Years—Changing Times—The Industrial Revolution and Consequent Changes—Change in Policy—Easy Victims of a Delusion—Nature of the Conflict—Sense of Superiority and Arrogant Ways—High-handedness—A Shallow Excuse—Instances of Racial Arrogance—Indian and European Arrogance—Lord Curzon—The Real Remedy—Great Needs of the English—Death in Peace—Way to Real Peace—The Future, Assuring.

IN considering the position of Europeans in India, the views of Indians are apt to be coloured by the bitter memories of the doings of their predecessors in the 17th and 18th centuries. In so far as they have a bearing on the course of Indian History they cannot be ignored, but there is a danger of judging their present attitude from their past. The march of events, both in England and in India, has effected changes in their attitude and policy in India in most respects for the better.

Mistake to be Avoided

Settlers abroad from any country, India not excluded, have always been drawn from the more adventurous elements in society, from classes with more ambitions and with less restraint from their passions. Cast amidst an alien population, the uglier elements of their character, repressed by an exacting public opinion at home, come to the surface as soon as the scrutiny to which they were subject is withdrawn.

Settlers Necessarily Adventurers

Morality both public and private was at a low level in Elizabethan England. The puritanic rigour under Cromwell gave way to the abandon of the Restoration, and improvement did not commence until the reign of George III, and no substantial advance was made until the Victorian era. The progress is reflected in the improvement of the character of the Britishers that came to India to seek their fortunes, always at a lower level than that of their social equals at home, but always better than that of their predecessors of a previous generation. In the earlier days of the East India Company, the men were, for the most part, unscrupulous adventurers whose greed for wealth, already beyond reasonable bounds, was whetted by its abundance in the country and the ease with which it could be obtained. The growing responsibility of ruling a large empire has repressed the predatory instincts, and the presence of a larger number of European women has helped to develop a social opinion in India itself among the Europeans, which

From the 17th to the 19th Century

has been wholesome in its effects on their character and bearing in the country. There have been, however, changes for the worse in other directions which it is the main purpose of this chapter to deal with.

A Very Powerful Minority.

Of the 320 millions of Indians but 175 thousands are Europeans, "a speck of foam on the dark thunderous ocean". Numerically insignificant, they have been the most important factor in the development of modern India. As rulers of the country, as merchants, as industrialists, traders, planters and missionaries, they have exerted the profoundest influence on Indian life and character.

Connection with England

And this effect has been produced, in spite of the fact that they do not make India their home. The Indian climate affects their constitution. It necessitates frequent leave home for recuperation, oftener still to summer resorts which they have built to escape from the heat of the plains. The children are usually saved from the baneful effects of residence in India by their education in their own country. Apprehending the deterioration on their constitution, a good many of them retire and return early to spend the closing years of their life in their own country.

It is unfortunate that this should be so, for it precludes for ever the possibility of an identification of European and Indian interests. Most of them, therefore, have but little thought beyond the furtherance of the immediate object of their stay in the country. The larger

interests, which affect the people as a whole, which have to do with their moral well-being and happiness—what Rulers, whose home is the same as of the people, are compelled in time to bestow thought upon—find little place in their thoughts. They can never feel one with the people among whom their lot is cast. A European comes and labours through years of misunderstanding to some degree of adjustment, He goes, another comes to his place, new to his surroundings, to repeat the same process. So generation after generation, each new, unfamiliar, puzzled, and distracted at first. There is thus no continuity of environment or experience. Could they stand the climate, they would have made India their home. For they live the life of princes in the country. They live in the best part of the town or city in commodious bungalows, situated in extensive and beautiful grounds. They have an abundance of servants. They have horses to ride, they play golf, tennis and polo, and they go hunting big game in the forests. These amenities of life would have been beyond their wildest dreams, had they not elected to go to India but stayed in their own country. And the enjoyment of these, so far above and beyond the standard of life of the Indians, emphasises further their sense of separateness from Indians.

Aloofness from the Country

It tends to foster the sense that they are a class apart, and along with the consciousness that they are the ruling race, the Britishers feel, not the superiority of class, as of an aristocracy

claiming the position by right of conquest or what is less baneful in its effects, of an aristocracy developed within the society itself by acknowledged superiorities in character, worth or wealth, but of a different order of beings. Accordingly, no precaution is omitted to resist or neutralise the effects of Indian environments, of the effects of climate on their constitution, and of the people and their ways on their character. Indians are not usually admitted to their society. They have prejudice against consulting Indian doctors, however highly qualified, and against admitting any, except the highly placed Indians, to their hotels. They have compartments in most railways, in which none but their own race may travel. They have usually their own caterers and their own schools.

A Superior Order

There used not to be the same isolation from Indians in the earlier years of British rule. A good number of Britishers then were solitary individuals in the up-country towns and remote stations where they were employed. Distance and difficulties of travel were such that but few had opportunities to meet; nor had European women begun to come in large numbers to share in the exile. They were thus thrown on the company of Indians and had more leisure and opportunity to study their ways and appreciate their culture, and the more highly educated found in the study of Sanskrit and its literature a fascinating pursuit for spare hours.

In Earlier Years

There arose, therefore, a cultural sympathy which went far to draw Indians and Europeans together. The best type of European administrators belong to this period, and names like those of Sir William Jones, Wilson, Colebrooke, Tod and Munro are still remembered with gratitude, and help not a little to mitigate the growing racial reaction against Europeans as a class. In the famous temple of Thirupathi in South India daily offerings are made in the name of Munro. The extirpation of Thugs, the abolition of infanticide and *Sati* were due to the high-mindedness and enthusiasm of men of this type.

Changing Times

But times changed. Facilities of travel between England and India, and within India itself, increased rapidly. An administration fast developing in range, complexity and routine required a much larger number of Europeans, and the opportunities of exploitation attracted many more. European women came in large numbers. Suitable hill-stations were discovered and built up. Hotels, newspapers, clubs, and gymkhanas sprang up in most of the places where there were a dozen or more Europeans.

By far the worst change, from the standpoint of India and her people, is the rapid industrialisation of England, and the capitalistic exploitation that followed soon after in the countries that passed under her rule. What England had sought till then were the food materials and the finished products of India. What

she required later was not grain alone for food, but other raw materials for her manufactures. A predominantly agricultural country, India could be kept easily as the reservoir of one, and the market for the other. About the effect of this policy on the wealth of the country enough has been written elsewhere. What is necessary here is to show how the change reacted on the attitude of the Europeans. A trade in finished products, even under a monopoly, affected directly only the trading classes and but indirectly the others. The interest of the European middlemen did not extend beyond it. But capitalistic exploitation widened and multiplied the interests, and brought them into opposition at practically all points with those of Indians. The resources in land and labour, metals and minerals, of fields and forests hitherto orientated with reference to the simplicity and slow pace of rural handicraft, but production had now to be organised to meet the inexorable requirements of the European capitalist and entrepreneur. The establishment by an external agency of capitalistic enterprises amidst rural production was like hitching on a bullock cart to an express engine.

The Industrial Revolution, and Consequent Changes

A rule in the interests of the ruled became a rule in the interests of the rulers. What had been no more than an isolation of a people distinct in race, culture and civilisation, was now an isolation of self-interest, not distinct and divergent, but in opposition. The shade of the exotic had perhaps

dwarfed the bushes below in its shade by cutting off the sun from them. It now fastened its haustoria on their roots. Business had been an adjunct to Government, Government now became almost an adjunct to business.

Change in Policy

The change-over from Government to exploitation altered for the worse the attitude of the Europeans. As rulers, what deficiencies they saw in standards of labour, production, marketing and business, if they saw them at all, drew their sympathy, but as exploiters, they excited their irritation, for they affected their business either directly, or indirectly. Resort was had to legislation where the deficiencies could be remedied by law, and, with each law passed in their interest, the sense of power over the people developed.

Human intellect is inclined to be pragmatic, and becomes increasingly so with growing preoccupation in self-interest. Rapid industrialisation and consequent absorption in self-interest has had that effect in the West, and those Westerners settled abroad, primarily in the pursuit of gain, have not escaped it. They nurse the delusion that what was primarily in their own interest was in the interest of Indians as well.

Easy Victims of a Delusion

They did not pause to reflect that society in the West and India were constituted on divergent, if not conflicting, principles. While they themselves had progressed on the line of right, intellect and will, Indians had advanced on the

line of duty, understanding and emotion. They failed to realise that the imposition of the former line of progress on a society wedded to the latter, with the aid of the authority of a ruling race, results in maladjustments, and tends to a premature supersession of an ancient culture, which has its roots deep in the centuries, and is furthermore reinforced by religious doctrine and economic theory. A dead and washed-out civilisation easily disintegrates and disappears leaving no bitter memories of defeat and humiliation. But Indian civilisation was not dead. It was prostrate. There was vitality still left, and when it revived under dislocations and irritations insupportable, it would recall the injury inflicted on it while it lay helpless.

Nature of the Conflict

Growing irritation on one side, at the persistence of low communal standards and growing resentment on the other, at forcing the pace to the ruin of ideals and interests, are not conducive to harmonious relations. The widening of the gulf may be traced in the writings of successive generations of Europeans on India. Earlier authors revealed no small sympathy and understanding. Though convinced of the superiority of their own civilisation and prepared to substitute it for the one they saw, they disclosed no small degree of appreciation for a culture that was not theirs. Their successors have no good word for the people, or for their civilisation. They write of them with

Sense of Superiority and Arrogant Ways

undisguised contempt. Britishers of earlier days left the country with genuine affection for the land in which they lived the best part of their lives, and had no small respect for some at least of her institutions. With the advance in years, they shed earlier prejudices, and developed their understanding. The longer the residence in the country in these days, the lower the people sink in their eyes. They take delight in retailing stories of humiliation to which they subject Indians of the more respectable classes, and of the discomfiture and defeat of Indians, secured with the aid of their prestige, or of their influence with Government officers in schemes in furtherance of their interests to which Indians are opposed. The glorying in racial humiliation is carried to such lengths that stories are invented as, for instance, the one that an Indian Prince declared that, on the withdrawal of Britain, no virgin would be left in Bengal. The wide popularity of these stories is an indication of the changed mental attitude. Wanton humiliation of a subject people, highly sensitive, is the most criminal among the follies of rulers.

The prestige and power of Europeans aggravates their irritation. The European can get a license for the possession of arms for the asking. He can claim trial by a jury of his own countrymen for offences, for which an Indian could not make a similar claim until a few years ago. On railways, at post and telegraph offices he can get his needs attended to first, no matter how many have come before him. He may insist

on post masters in remote towns opening their offices to suit his convenience. The goods he has to book will be dealt with first at booking offices. He can get the local magistrate or police officer to prohibit music at temples and festivals after 10 in the night.

High-handedness

In many of these cases, the preferential treatment is volunteered rather than demanded, which indeed makes matters worse. The Indian official knows that a word from the European he has to deal with to the higher authorities, may make or mar him and he may be excused, if he goes out of his way to help him to the annoyance or inconvenience of Indians. There are cases where a word from a bribe-taking butler or peon has secured promotions, or resulted in degradation of respectable Indian officers.

A Shallow Excuse

These experiences from day to day tend to swell his pride to inordinate dimensions, and irritation under these circumstances leads to violent outbursts ending in insults and assaults.

The records against the Europeans in this respect are not pleasant reading. Newspapers often bring reports of happenings here and there of thoughtless incivilities offered and offences committed by soldiers and civilians, who choose to make a provocative exhibition of their superiority as belonging to the ruling race. Many such occurrences, in the nature of the circumstances, could not obtain publicity at all. Instances of such arrogance happen to be particularly numerous

on the Railway trains. The Europeans, travelling in the first or second class and looking upon those berths more or less as their monopoly, generally took on an offensive attitude towards their Indian fellow travellers. Even men of high status and repute such as Justice Ranade and the Hon'ble Mr. Gokhale were not free from unpleasant experiences of European insolence. The treatment accorded to Indian labourers by Europeans in the plantation areas assumed a special importance, as is fairly well known, in the Nil Darpan case and what followed it. A poem holding up Nicholson as a hero for humiliating an Indian Maharaja was allowed in text-books. Racial arrogance of the European as belonging to a superior order could be seen in its climax, perhaps in the agitation against the Ilbert Bill. These and cases similar to the Rangoon and O'Hara cases are not forgotten. The appearance of a 'Tommy', or of one who resembles him, in the neighbourhood of a bazaar creates a scare almost similar to that which the report of an Englishman's approach gave rise to in Indian villages as observed and recorded by Warren Hastings.

Instances of Racial Arrogance

For grave offences, the punishment has been almost always hopelessly inadequate. The lenience shown by the courts adds considerably to the resentment of the people, when similar offences on the part of Indians against Europeans are punished with extreme severity. It must be remembered that, for the few that come to the knowledge of the public, many are not brought to their notice.

The victims are too poor or too wise to take to the notice of the authorities their complaints and get redress. Evidence would not be given easily against the European, and the offender has privileges of trial by a jury of his own countrymen, who are almost always inclined to return a verdict of not guilty.

We are apt to consider that, after all, many Indians themselves there are who are guilty of offences, similar to the ones which the Europeans are occasionally guilty of. That is true, but the Indian offender is subject to the opinion of his society. If he does not suffer legally, he does so morally, from the condemnation by society of his offence, and from the marks of displeasure which his own countrymen can manifest in various ways. The European belongs to a community altogether apart, and is wholly unaffected by the opinion of the Indians, indeed, may laugh at it. Every thoughtless act of the European involves therefore a humiliation not of the individual alone, but of the race as a whole. Nothing brings home to the mind of the Indian so vividly his servitude as these offences on the part of the Europeans.

Indian and European Arrogance

It need scarcely be said that the better class of Europeans successfully repress these tendencies, and, themselves exercising better control, they have not been slow to perceive the consequences of these unseemly exhibitions of racial arrogance on the part of their countrymen. Lord Curzon was the first to take serious notice of a growing evil. Where magistrates have

been too lenient in their punishments of offenders from their community, the cases have been taken to the High Court for revision and enhancement of sentences. Cases of insolent behaviour in railway trains towards Indians are, wherever possible, taken serious notice of. There has therefore been a steady improvement, but a few cases still occur which suffice to exacerbate Indian feelings, now more easily roused by the growing nationalism.

Lord Curzon

The prevention of the evil is not in deterrent punishments, but in removing the privileges in law and administration which the European enjoys at present. It is not impossible, under the safeguards, to put them on the same level with Indians. Once the immunities and privileges are taken away, the class, now responsible for the kind of offences cited, would develop sufficient restraints to avoid brutal exhibitions of their temper at helpless and inoffensive Indians.

The Real Remedy

What is even more important is that the more educated among them should use the abundant opportunities they have of developing their sympathy with the people and their appreciation of their culture and civilisation. No people have a right to rule over another who have no sympathy with them. A rule based on narrow understanding has no moral sanctions behind it. The English of all people on earth, with the burden of a far-flung empire on them, should cultivate understanding and sympathy most.

Great Need of the English

Hospitals dispensing Western medicine, schools and colleges established to supercede Indian culture, and a multiplicity of Departments, routine-ridden and mechanical, do not suffice. Nor does the peace and order established by them, made so much of on every occasion as the gift of England to India, help to draw the people to them. There may be death in peace as much as peace in death. There has been much more real peace in India than in any other country in the world. Her whole civilisation has been developed to give to man not the mere peace of mind but the more enduring peace of the soul. Nor were Indian wars the prolonged sustained struggle of a people against another, occasioning wide-spread devastations and prolonged sufferings to the people such as the Hundred Years' War and the Thirty Years' War, and others of Europe were. A single battle between contending armies decided the issue, and the people, seldom disturbed from their occupations, continued to pursue their avocations as though nothing had happened. To the Englishman belongs the eternal credit of bringing India under one rule, and of preventing even these. He has established too a uniform code of law and a high standard of administration. He has provided for various services, but Indians are not happy, for they have not had the mental peace which is born of understanding and sympathy.

The Death in Peace

Peace can come to India if the Englishman will shed his pride, and cease to delude himself with the catchwords of Imperialistic policy, and set about to cultivate his understanding and sympathy. He may believe in the virtues, even in the superiority, of his civilisation, but he should understand, more than he does now, the culture of the people which, wittingly or unwittingly, his has been the agency to supersede. Andrews, Sister Nivedita, Havell and many others are names sacred to Indians, because they had sympathy with the lot of her millions and understood their ways. But these are exceptions. Most Europeans live a life apart and altogether remote from the life of Indians with very little healthy contact anywhere with the people. It is not impossible for the average European to change his attitude and aloofness, his contempt and irritation, and acquire a knowledge and understanding of the simple folk around him, and try to irradiate their dark and desolate lives with a little of his sympathy. If he does so, he will find his life in India, now so much swinging perpetually between work and recreation, enriched by the esteem and affection of the people.

Way to Real Peace

It may be that British Rule is drawing to a close. Even when it has ceased, the Britisher will have a useful part to play. His standards of efficiency, sense of duty, his devotion to work and his discipline would be of the highest value in effecting the many complicated adjustments India has to make to keep pace with the march

of times. Whatever the manifestations of racial feeling in the present day, they are the result of an abnormal and truncated life. At heart the Indian can have no prejudice, for his whole civilisation is based on the principle of a reconciliation of races, and he will cease to entertain the bitter feelings that now dominate him, as soon as the Englishman lays aside his pride and gives him a helping hand to enable him to rise to the full stature of his manhood.

The Future, Assuring

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23. CHRISTIANITY IN INDIA

A Minority in Harmony—Policy of Christian Organisations—Need for Adaptations—In Vernacularisation—In Atmosphere—Sectarianism—Incompatibility of Doctrine—Conception of Godhead—The European Christian Missionary—Missions in Business—Missionary Education—Christian Spirit Unsuited to India—Real Causes of Christian Discontent—Foreign Direction—Credit Due to Missions—Nationalism.

THE six millions of Indian Christians have not so far materially added to the difficulties of political progress in India. A minor community, likely to suffer without due safeguards in a constitution of Government on Western lines, they have nevertheless, for the most part, put themselves in line with the advanced political thought of the country. And their religion, in all its essential features, is so much in harmony with the true spirit of Hinduism that there are no apprehensions, on the part of the followers of the latter religion, of any discordant note in the Indian symphony that is to be.

A Minority in Harmony

There need not have been, therefore, a chapter on the subject but for the fact that, in the policy and the method which have been adopted in the spread of the religion, may be traced more clearly and in greater detail, some of the serious defects of British administration

which have been dealt with in the previous chapters, and which are responsible for the unhealthy elements in Indian unrest to-day. Christian organisations in India are not a part of the Government nor an agency of it, receive no subsidy from it and are not influenced by it in their policy. They are concerned with the spiritual welfare of the people, and yet, their policies and methods betray the same inability to adapt to Indian conditions, the same ignorance of Indian psychology, the same mistrust of Indian self-direction, and the same passion for rigid organisation.

Policy of Christian Organisations

Hence arises the very strange circumstance, the significance of which is not as fully understood as it ought to be, that Indian Christianity is Western Christianity. That it should be so is perhaps the severest condemnation of the propagandists of the Gospel. For, but little reflection is needed to realise that Religion can and ought to express itself only in ritual, ceremonial and thought forms, distinctive but in harmony with the genius and spirit of the people, and that any discordance is a serious danger to religious sincerity and religious emotion. In the course of its spread over Europe, a wise syncretism helped Christianity to incorporate symbols and doctrines without which it may not have made such headway there as it did. Alexandrian, Grecian, and Roman schools of thought had each its contributions to make, and in the magnificence of

Need for Adaptations

ceremonial worship and the splendour of the cathedrals of the Roman Catholics, one but sees reflected the same features associated with the courts of the medieval kings of Europe. These lessons from History were lost on the missionaries with the solitary exception of the Jesuit Robert de Nobilibus who saw the potency of adaptation, but went too far in basing his scheme of conversion on fraud. It is unnecessary to recount here the astounding details of his deceptive methods, but one must record to his credit his perception that the alignment of Christianity on familiar lines of thought would give it a momentum that would carry all before it. He based his work on fraud and failed. But others did not perceive the need of adaptation and pursued methods best suited perhaps to their own country, but wholly inapplicable to India.

Their translations of the Bible into the vernacular used inappropriate words and expressions which, in the contexts they were used, often excited derision. The word 'bread', for example, in the sentence in the Lord's prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread" was translated into a word, which signified a special article of food, prepared for feasts and festivals, and not ordinarily an item of the daily menu, something that children may ask for outside of special occasions. The Hindu never dreams of asking God for this daily food. The request for a luxury article appears to him very similar to the request of a child for

In Vernacularisation

sweets, and he cannot understand how it could possibly be made to God by a grown up man or woman. The true significance of it, that even the daily necessaries of life are or ought to be considered as a gift from God, does not dawn on him, much less in the minds of boys and girls. Similar faults in words and expressions may be found by the dozen in vernacular Bibles, and they render it very difficult to attune the mind of Indian students to the serious nature of the study.

In Atmosphere

The hymns used in Indian churches again are Western in conception, and set to music which is Western, and which, without long practice, Indians do not appreciate. Their emotional appeals are, therefore, lost on them. The architecture of the churches is similarly Western, and does not blend with their Eastern surroundings, and, inside them, the furnishings too are Western. The worshippers kneel before God, and not prostrate as in the East. Bread and wine, of all things wine, are consecrated and distributed instead of substitutes more appropriate in India. Congregational worship has its uses, but is not congenial to Indian temperament. It is nevertheless imposed on Indian Christians. Sermons have no analogy in Indian worship. Their appeals to the intellect disturb the intimacy of communion which the Indian seeks. Yet, these exhortations are sandwiched between the services.

There are over a hundred and fifty Christian denominations, each holding fast to its tenets.

They have not yet felt the necessity of pooling their resources in men and money, although it is so obvious to the outsider that by so doing they could not only utilise both to the best advantage, but could give greater unity and cohesion to Indian Christians, so necessary to a minority community. To Indian Christians, more than to their European ministers, the incongruity has become obvious of a Religion proclaiming the brotherhood of man, and yet, of its sects refusing to each other the privilege of taking part in the holy communion. They have themselves seen offerings to Gods in Hindu temples distributed, irrespective of caste and community. They themselves, before conversion, had shared in the general distribution, and they chafe against a meaningless distinction, so contradictory to Christian teaching. Of the effect on the Hindus, little need be said about this foolish punctilio.

Sectarianism

The doctrines of original sin and vicarious punishment are wholly incompatible with Indian religious temperament. They cannot comprehend that a merciful God, above all a God of righteousness, should punish descendants for the guilt of ancestors. Their own doctrine of *karma* is a conception more logical, and very much more just to God and to the Individual; nor are the wholly disproportionate rewards and punishments easily reconciled with an All-merciful God in the Hindu mind. The belief that the actions of a single life, if virtuous, will be rewarded with an

Incompatibility of Doctrine

eternity of joy, and if sinful, with punishment equally everlasting, is opposed even to the canons of mundane law, and is wholly against what ought to be the attributes of a Heavenly Father. And yet, nothing has been done to elevate the doctrine of atonement to a higher and juster conception.

The majesty, power, magnificence and transcendence of God, so much stressed in Western Christianity, are not the attributes which the Indian would like to dwell upon. His civilisation and culture are based on the principle of social harmony and on the perception of unity beneath diversity. The immanence of God and His love are the attributes on which he has dwelt in the past, and on which he would like to dwell still. The transcendence of God and His fatherhood have been among the influences at work in the West in making man there nurse the belief that he is the God of creation, and that all things in creation are made for his special benefit, and, what is worse, in making him oblivious of the unity of all sentient life. The attitude so developed has been prolific of evil in the West, and it would work much greater disaster in India of many castes, creeds and races, and would prove subversive of the deep humanity of Indian culture. The Brahmin reserved for his place of origin the head of *Brahma*, but permitted the other castes also to originate from *Brahma*, though from other parts of this body. The *soi-disant* elect of God would have reserved

Conception of Godhead

the creator exclusively to themselves, and traced the origin of the rest to the God of Death. Perdition to unbelievers is a most dangerous dectrine in India. Fortunately, Indian Christians are above it, not on account of, but in spite of their religion.

So much for Christianity. Coming to the missionary himself, his mode and standard of life are not what Indians would look for in a religious priest, much less what Christ would have expected of him. Renunciation is the idea of the Indian *Sanyasi*, and he would not dream of providing himself with worldly goods. Of silver and gold he will have none. That is a high ideal, but it is there, and the missionary who has ordinarily a much higher standard of life than the Indians around him, though much lower than that of other Europeans in other walks of life, comes in for a lot of criticism and ridicule, much of it undeserved, but pertinent when the influence of his teaching is to be measured. The difference in habits, dress and standard makes for isolation and detachment, and these, being of the same kind as that of his race in other walks of life, creates the misconception that he is not only in race but in attitude, interest and policy as well, one with them. In the true spirit of Christ's teaching, if he could but take no thought of the morrow, and would approach Indians on their plane of life and thought, an abundant harvest would reward his labours. Could he but do it, all the costly and elaborate

The European Christian Missionary

organisations built up, the routines of reports, inspections, checks and counterchecks, now taking so much of his time, would not have been necessary, and he could have concentrated more fully and freely on his mission. What is far more important, the Indian priests working under him would have been attracted to the calling, more for the opportunity of service than for their pay. The sacrifice is difficult, but not impossible. There have been missionaries long past, who have made sacrifices very much greater, and faced trials and tribulations such as the missionaries of modern times, even in the most unsettled and barbarous country, have seldom to undergo.

Missions in Business

A few missionary organisations are so costly that they cannot be supported by foreign subscriptions alone. They have accordingly resorted to the highly questionable procedure of entering the industrial field, and of so adding to their slender resources. Highly profitable concerns have been built up in which many hundreds of Christians find employment. The certainty of profitable employment under the missionaries has proved too strong an attraction to poverty-stricken and caste-oppressed Indians, who have entered the Christian fold with no thought of Christ. From the standpoint of the industrial development of the country, the services done by industrial missions have been of the highest value and have conferred no small benefit in the parts of the country where they have carried on their work. Several thousands have been reclaimed from dirt, disease and

starvation to clean and respectable lives, and several Indians have copied their enterprises and attained to considerable wealth. It is hard to criticise these ventures. It must be said, however, that the motive of conversion has been vitiated, and a great deal of religious insincerity has been rendered possible.

In the field of education, the missionaries have played even a more conspicuous part. Their schools and colleges have been very popular, and some of them have attained to a level of efficiency which Government Institutions have failed to reach. While the education has been of very high quality, the effect, that was hoped would follow, has not been realised. The teaching of the Bible has had little effect on the students, though the personality of some of the staffs has exercised no small influence on them. In the early days, the misionaries had hoped that the Bible and Western science and literature would undermine the whole superstructure of Hindu superstition. They forgot, or failed to perceive, that religious feeling suffused in every fibre of the Hindu, and that there was religious feeling in all his actions. Bible lessons of an hour's duration each day, dismissed as unimportant because they were not required for the examination, failed altogether to produce the desired result. It rather provided material for shallow criticism of the Bible, to meet criticism as shallow made by the missionaries of Hindu religious books. The indifference of the students to Bible classes is notorious. They

Missionary Education

put up with the inconvenience for the sake of the lower fees, and often, of effective teaching in other subjects. The most serious defect of these Christian institutions is the absence of Christian atmosphere. A few Christian teachers and a European missionary in charge, prayers in which Christian students alone take part, and an hour of Bible teaching do not suffice to create the atmosphere in institutions in which the majority of the students are drawn from other religions.

Nor have the missionaries realised the deeper and more urgent needs of modern India. What India needs now is the energy and resources to reach the full height of her moral stature. Christianity has been useful perhaps in the West to release manhood there from the burden of superstition, but, in India, it seeks to substitute one set of superstitions for another.

Christian Spirit Unsuited to India

The doctrines of salvation only for the Christian, of original sin and vicarious punishment are to the Indian mind superstitions. Furthermore, what the Hindu wants is the energy to action. There has been insistence enough and more on the life of the spirit and of charity in Hinduism itself, and his cultivation of these has been carried to a point where his will to action has become weak. As early as the battle of Kurukshetra, we find Krishna hammering out a course of action from Hindu philosophical doctrines which foster inaction. Indeed, one is tempted from this standpoint to

doubt whether Christianity is suited to India at all. As a corrective to excess of animality, to narrowness of understanding and absorption in materialism, Christianity has been of great service to the West. Here, in India, the problem is just the reverse, to rouse people from inaction to action. Not to moderate exuberance of energies, but to rouse them.

Indeed, one is not sure whether it will not help to perpetuate political subjection. Christianity has been, for a great part of its history, the religion of the underdog in the West, and Indians, who are still in that position, may rest content with the solace it offers. That it has not been sought by large numbers is because, of that kind of solace there is enough in popular Hinduism itself. A pacifically inclined people nurtured in philosophical quietism have to be galvanised into action. There is little in Christianity to energise but much to pacify and reconcile. There is too much, far too much, of the latter excellences in Hinduism.

One may reasonably question after this analysis why there are Indian Christians rebelling against the control and direction of the missionaries. They should, according to the view of Christianity given above, patiently submit to it without protest. It is not a difficult question to answer. In the first place, the question may be addressed with regard to Hindus themselves, why, in spite of the docility, submissiveness and patience, fostered by their religion, British Rule is no longer

Real Causes of Christian Discontent

tolerated. The numerous irritants, which are operative in their case, affect the Christians also. Add to these the vexations of an organisation created by the missionaries in a sphere in which Indian culture has allowed the greatest freedom. Belonging for the most part to lower castes, they had a simple religion; they knew neither creeds nor the niceties of sectarian distinctions. As Christians, they have to observe forms and formulae, narrow in conception, which, as shown earlier in the chapter, are in continuous disharmony with inherited aptitudes and cultural leanings. Their release from the domination of caste, their wider education, the disruption of Joint-family among them, and their imitation of Western institutions have made for the spread of greater individualism, and, therefore, made the domination of the missionary less welcome. They have not been slow to perceive the racial barrier to advancement in the religious field, and they are unable to reconcile it with the doctrines they have been taught. They have hungered for the union of the Indian churches, but the union has not yet been effected. They have been released from the tyranny of caste, only to find themselves face to face with the tyranny of the soul.

It may seem ungrateful on the part of Indian Christians. So much has been done for them. They are living cleaner and healthier lives. Education is theirs, opportunity is theirs. But, none can train people to habits of independence and deny it when the demand is made, foster in them ideas of self-respect and then treat them

with scant courtesy, or release them from one kind of bondage to subject them to one of another kind. The time has long come, when Indian Christians have to be left to solve their problems in their own way. The missionary may assist, but may no longer direct or dictate.

Foreign Direction

The truth is slowly soaking into the minds of the missionaries that Christianity, to exert its full appeal, must be Indian and fit in with the Indian genius and temperament. And Indian Christians, left to themselves, will not fail in the task. The advent of Sadhu Sunder Singh bears ample promise for the future, and has gone, to some extent, to remove the doubts and hesitations of the missionaries, and helped them to go forward with more courage along a line of policy which would leave Indian Christians a large measure of self-direction in the solution of their problems.

The brief account given above has not been in any spirit of carping criticism of the missionary. There is a great deal of useful work to his credit in India, outside the field, it must be admitted, in which credit would be most welcome to him. His work has indirectly set in motion social forces which are wholesome in their effects. He has supplemented generously the educational efforts of the Government. In several fields of educational activity, he has led the way. The cleaner and healthier lives of Indian Christians are directly due to his work. He has awakened the Hindu to a sense of responsibility towards the untouchables. To

Credit Due to Missions

the Y. M. C. A., much of the criticism made above does not apply. They have shown much greater liberality of spirit, and have engaged themselves in work which is professedly outside the sphere of religious propaganda, but which is vital to the welfare of India. They have gone on the principle that true service, no matter in which sphere—religious, social or economic—is service in the spirit of Christ.

These are to the lasting credit of the missionary. The account given above, therefore, is in no spirit of inappreciative criticism. Its main object has been to show more clearly, and in a small section, details of British policy which are lost to view when the sphere of European activity is seen as a whole. An examination of it will convince the reader that the demand for self-direction on the part of Indian Christians is of a piece with the wider demand for self-direction on the part of Indian people as a whole.

Nationalism

It was to be expected that, in their present mood, Indian Christians would enter fully into the spirit of Indian nationalism. In the limited sphere of their own religion, they have felt the moral paralysis following a close and exacting domination by the missionary, and they can enter better than the rest of Indians into the spirit of a movement which aims at preventing a similar calamity threatening the people as a whole, of whom they are a part.

24. INDIAN MUHAMMADANS

A Complex Problem—Systematic Misrepresentation of Islam—Charge of Intolerance Ill-founded—Islamic Tolerance in India—Later Growth of Intolerance—Rationalism Overcome by Scholasticism—Recent Movements—Attitude of Indian Muslims—Mutual Studies to be Encouraged—Hindu-Muslim Psychology—The 'Goonda'—The Real Remedy—Want of Adjustment—Strong Sense of Brotherhood—Outlook Narrow and Out of Date—Communal Fears and Exclusiveness—Progress of the Community—Reason for Unfair Demands—Limits to Pan-Islamism—Present Deplorable Attitude—Reaction Provoked—Innate Strength of Indian Muslims—The Way of Danger—The Future.

IF the five millions of Indian Christians present no difficult problems of adjustment in Indian political progress, the presence of seventy-seven millions of the followers of Islam makes it one of the very greatest complexity. There is no antagonism between the essentials of Hinduism and of Christianity. What is vital to one is no less vital to the other, and both will fit into a common culture. Christianity is no more than a religion. It has, in the past, adjusted and it can now adjust itself to any culture or civilisation. Islam is not merely a religion: it is a culture and a civilisation as well.

A Complex Problem

Its followers are jealous of its identity more perhaps in India than in any other country.

The difficulties of the problems, raised by the presence of Muhammadans in India, cannot be understood properly without more knowledge of the religion than there is at present. Muhammadanism has suffered more than any other religion from continuous and systematic misrepresentation. A great many of the truths relating to it now lie obscured to the Hindus, and to the less educated classes of Muhammadans themselves. The misrepresentations are a heritage from the days of the Crusades. What was at first in the interests of Christian bigotry has been continued in the interests of Western aggrandisement. The presence of a Muhammadan power in Europe, and that in a position of great strategical importance, has been hateful to Christian Europe, and Turkey survived only because the powers could not agree to a division among themselves. It has, however, not prevented the West from reducing her political importance on every conceivable pretext and helping Greece, a Christian power, more likely to be friendly to their interest, to secure the predominance in the Levant. Stories of Islamic intolerance and massacre of Christians have been sedulously spread to justify Christian Europe in the dismemberment of Turkey. For all the Turkish valour and heroism displayed during the Crimean War, Gladstone could still speak of the unspeakable Turk, and Lloyd George and Lord Curzon continued the tradition.

Systematic Misrepresentation of Islam

The charge of intolerance against Muhammadans could be disproved by reference to history. It could indeed be shown that at no time was intolerance among them so great as among the Christians of medieval Europe. In the 15th century, Spanish Jews took refuge in Turkey. The Calvinists of Hungary, Transylvania and the Unitarians of the latter country escaped into Turkey from the persecutions of the House of Hapsburg. The Old Believers, a sect of Christians in Russia, were driven by the Russian State Church in 1786 to seek refuge in Turkey.

Charge of Intolerance Ill-founded

In India, during the earlier years of Muslim rule, there was no small latitude shown to Hinduism. The endowments of Hindu kings to Hindu temples were respected, and expenditure of State funds, incurred in connection with temple festivals, was continued, and that healthy tradition is maintained today in some of the States under Muhammadan rule. The Christian Government now finds it subversive of their religion to continue expenditure of State funds in connection with festivals at Hindu temples. Hindu temples were spared even inside Muhammadan fortifications and one may be seen even today surviving in what was Tippu's fort at Bangalore. Friendly correspondence between him and the head of the Sringery Mutt has been recently discovered.

Islamic Tolerance in India

'Dispute ye not, save in the kindliest sort, with the people of the Book,' 'Let there be no compulsion in Religion'—are

among the sayings of the Prophet himself, and there is ample historical evidence that, in the earlier centuries of Islamic spread, these sentiments of the Prophet were respected. It is in the later period that intolerance grew. The contact with other races and cultures, their half-hearted allegiance to Islamic rule, and their often suspected disloyalty were, along with the exchange of the simplicity and austerity of life of the early Muhammadans for the luxury and high life which accession to enormous wealth rendered possible, among the factors which stiffened the dogmatism of Islamic theology. It is not difficult to realise that, with the influx into the Islamic fold of various races and types of cultures, there was increasing necessity to emphasize the letter rather than the spirit of Islam. As between Arabian tribes, there was homogeneity of race, thought, feeling and culture, and they had but to accept a common religion for their mutual hostility to cease. In the triumphant march of Islam—East, West and North—tribal jealousies were forgotten, and unity of the highest degree was developed by the comradeship in arms under a common religious impulse. The same unity could not be infused into the vast numbers that accepted the new faith, and it is but natural that increasing emphasis should be placed on the letter rather than the spirit of Islam.

Later Growth of Intolerance

The course of events was unfortunate for Islam. It made for the gradual victory of Islamic

scholasticism over the Rationalism of the first few centuries of the *Hegira*. The earlier period had been the flowering time of Islamic genius.

Rationalism Overcome by Scholasticism

It had sheltered and nursed the culture of Europe, discarded and forgotten by her. It had passed on to Europe enriched and augmented, the sciences and arts of the Hindus. With the change, the spirit of scientific research and the passion for arts for which Islam had been famous, and of which its literature and its architecture are still eloquent testimony, suffered a decay from which it has yet to revive. The victory of scholasticism over rationalism took place at a time when in European Christianity the tables had been turned against Scholasticism. While Europe made up for lost time and made rapid headway, for Islam the engines were reversed.

A prolonged period of decay and degeneration followed; country after country passed from the rule of Islam to that of the West. Even in what little was left, the domination of the West was increasingly felt. The systematic misrepresentation of Islam and the increasing domination of the West brought about a reaction about the middle of the 19th century. Various sects were founded; the *Wahabis*, the *Derwishes*, the *Mahdis*, and the

Recent Movements

Bahais, more or less committed to a revival of the spirit of early Islam. The movement of Pan-Islam originated to maintain Muslim solidarity and brotherhood, under the exigencies of political subjection and domination by Christian powers.

The Revolution of 1908 in Turkey overthrew Sultan Abdul Hamid and succeeded in establishing the semblance of a representative Government. European diplomacy tried to thwart movements of reform, and for a long time progress was hindered, until at last, in Mustapha Kemal, a man was found too strong to be deterred from the pursuit of a systematic policy of national consolidation and national regeneration. But the Turks are yet very far from being a rallying point for Islamic revival. Egypt is yet to win her independence, and other Muslim countries are still further behind in regard to sovereignty.

Attitude of Indian Muslims

Islam and its history has to be studied in much greater detail, than it has been possible to indicate above, to understand the psychological attitude of Indian Muslims. The memories of past glory, and the hopes of a future as glorious surge in their bosoms. Their thoughts are set so much on the future that they are oblivious of the present, and if it enters their thoughts at all, they want it transformed to fit into the picture of the future they envisage. They would rather stretch the arm of brotherhood to their co-religionists across the seas and the borders in the north than to their fellow subjects in India. Indeed, one is not sure that, in the case of some at least of the Muhammadans, Pan-Islamic sentiment is not proving too strong for local patriotism. That Hindus are not in full sympathy with their dreams of the future is a cause for grievance.

It is unfortunate that in Indian Universities there is no encouragement for the study of Islamic and Hindu cultures, each by the followers of the other. Hindu and Muhammadan Princes should come forward with liberal endowments to enable students to study the two civilisations of India. For mutual respect and understanding between the two cultures, there should be in the country a large number of educated men, well versed in both, whose research and writings would go a great way to dispel the ignorance that is now so serious an obstacle to concord and harmony.

Mutual Studies to be Encouraged

With the Hindus, the memory is still green of the travail and tribulations the country had to undergo during Muhammadan invasions. It is forgotten that the rules of warfare of the 16th and 17th centuries, in the countries where the invaders came from, were barbarous in the extreme, and, when combined with the narrow spirit of later Islam, led them to cruelties and barbarities to which they are not likely to descend in these more modern days. The Muhammadans, on their side, cannot forget that, not very long ago, Hindus were their subjects. The sense of superiority has not been worn off by their common subjection to the British. The conviction lingers still that, should any occasion still arise for a trial of strength, they may yet prove their superiority in arms.

Hindu-Muslim Psychology

And there is much to foster that sense. The Hindus, more peacefully inclined, are not roused to action in situations in which Muhammadans

would get excited. It tempts the Muhammadans of the lower classes to bully simple villagers. If any altercation ensues, all the Muhammadans on the spot make common cause and threaten violence, no matter how unjust the cause they espouse.

The 'Goonda'

These grievances of the Hindus can disappear only if they are capable of union in the same degree, or at least will stand no longer any bullying. No Government, however vigilant and powerful, can prevent these excesses, against which the checks must arise within Hindu society itself. In any case, they are not any indication of serious moral aberration in the Muhammadan community. They show only that the moral balance between the two communities needs adjustment. Those who are guilty of reprehensible conduct are among the lower orders, excitable, and at times, fanatic. They are, most of them, economically in a bad way. The mild and peaceable Hindu, inclined to give way rather than assert, tempts them to bully and exploit.

The Real Remedy

The Hindus are no longer insensible to their failings which are primarily the cause for these excesses, and latterly, they have not let the lower classes of the Muhammadan community to have their own way. There have been reprisals which have ended in riots, and there will continue to be riots until the balance between the two communities is better adjusted.

Want of Adjustment

These occasional squabbles and quarrels are not a serious matter. What is really grave is the strictly communal outlook of far too great a proportion of the Muhammadans. We have already referred to the narrow dogmatism of the later theology of Islam. It is now necessary to refer to other factors. Islam and the Islamic empire grew together. The cohesion and discipline, the comradeship in arms and the share in the rich booty played no small part in giving to Islam its democratic spirit. The lowliest and poorest could aspire to the highest position, no matter to which race he belonged, and, in the rapid growth of the Islamic Empire, opportunities were numerous to fire human ambitions. Slaves have been married into the families of kings or have become kings themselves. Furthermore, the simplicity of its creed made it universally understood and reduced the chances of doctrinal distinctions, and therefore, of the disunions which they cause. The ritual is as simple, and enters so much into the daily life of the followers that a sense of brotherhood is developed by them. In the mosques, at prayers, no distinctions of rank are allowed, and all bow down to the same God. The daily prayers of the individual, sometimes offered at social functions or during journeys in railway compartments, even at the risk of appearing ostentatious, and the frequent telling of beads fosters a sense of ever present protection and guidance from God which is a moral asset of the highest value, strengthening the individual as well as the

Strong Sense of Brotherhood

brotherhood. Their strict monotheism and their hatred of idolatry are also elements of union. The cohesion and solidarity thus secured makes the individual feel that he has the support of his co-religionists in his dealings with the members of other communities, and that they will rise as one man, if injustice or insult is offered to him. No religion has succeeded in creating a spirit of brotherhood among its followers in anything like the same degree.

While this sense of brotherhood has been a great asset in the triumphant march of Islam through various countries of the world, helping it to maintain its political and religious domination unimpaired, it has been continued much in the same spirit in India where its political dominance is a thing of the past and the community has to live side by side on a footing of equality, amity and peace with others. The result has been that the individual in his relation with members of other communities concerned himself with the approval of his own community, and has failed to develop a national, as distinguished from a communal, conscience.

Outlook Narrow

Even where a community is in political power as the Europeans in India, we have seen the danger of moral sanctions weakening or ceasing to influence them under the stress of having to maintain their prestige. They are, however, the rulers of the country. But Muhammadans are politically in the same level with the Hindus, and

have to share a common fate. An exclusively communal conscience under the circumstances is wholly inadequate, and makes for alienations, that are far from helpful to the political advance of the country. The doctrine of *Idjma*, according to which the general sentiment of the community ought to be considered as right, is an ideal formula for it when it has the power and the desire to evolve freely, and adapt itself to the changing requirements of the times. But in the joint evolution with another community towards a common political goal, it ought to serve more as a safeguard than a guide. Communal inclinations have to be subordinated to national well-being. It is a question whether the community as a whole has advanced to this broader outlook.

And Out of Date

There is much to be said in excuse of the Muhammadans if that higher standard of conduct has not been reached. In the first place, in close contact with a highly absorbent Hinduism with followers more than thrice as many as their own, they have fears of losing their identity and integrity. Too many among them still retain a Hindu soul. They do not hesitate to consult Hindu astrologers. There are a number of Muhammadan ceremonies, which have items which are essentially Hindu. The distribution of sandal paste, of presents of cloth, and the breaking of bangles at the time of the death of her husband by the wife are typically Hindu. Hindus take part in celebrations of the Moharram in several parts of

Communal Fears

the country. Lower classes among Muhammadans make offerings at Hindu shrines, and Hindus return the courtesy by making offerings at Muhammadan mosques, notably the one at Nagapatam. Cases are not infrequent of large numbers of Muhammadans retaining Hindu customs and manners, or reverting to them on reconversion to Christianity,

And Exclusiveness

The effacement of clear lines of demarcation at the outskirts of Muhammadanism is a cause for serious apprehension, the more so because there is now more importance attached to the letter rather than the spirit of Islamic Law. It accounts, partly at any rate, for the refusal of charity by Muhammadans to Hindu beggars, and for Muhammadans, wherever possible, giving their custom to Muhammadan shop-keepers, a reservation which Hindus rarely observe. The sacrifice of the cow on the day of *Bakrid*, an animal sacred to Hindus, was intended to humiliate them, and is now retained to preserve the dividing line of the Muhammadans.

Progress of the Community

The truth is that Muhammadans have been reduced in India to the same level as the Hindus, and the many readjustments, necessary to meet effectively the requirements of a change from the position of rulers to one of common subjection along with them, have not been successfully effected, even after the lapse of a century and a half. The Hindus, very much longer under subjection, have occupied the fields open to a subject people, and

Muhammadans, newly descended to that position, have to train themselves to avocations new to them in fields already in occupation by the Hindus. Even so, we have the finest craftsmen from amongst the Muslims,—notably carpenters and weavers and carpet weavers.

Here is a picture of the Muhammadans of Bengal in the thirties of the last century, taken from Mr. Adams' report on the state of indigenous education in Bengal and Behar:

> The Hindus, with exceptions, of course, are the principal zamindars, talookdars, public officers, men of learning, money lenders, traders, shop-keepers, and engaging in the most active pursuits of life, and coming directly and frequently under the notice of the rulers of the country, while the Muhammadans, with exceptions also, form a very large majority of the cultivators of the ground and of day labourers and others engaged in the humblest forms of mechanical skill and of buying and selling, as tailors, turban-makers, makers of Hukka snakes, dyers, wood-polishers, oil-sellers, sellers of vegetables, fish, etc., in few instances attracting the attention of those who do not mix much with the humbler classes of the people, or make special enquiry into these occupations and circumstances.

Further on in the same report he speaks of "the greater degradation and ignorance of the lower classes of Mussalmans when compared with the corresponding classes of Hindu population, as a simple undeniable matter of fact". While the proportion of Hindus to Muhammadans was as 2 to 1 in Bengal, the proportion among literates was 18 to 1.

During the century that has lapsed since the above was written, the Muhammadans have progressed considerably. They are increasing in numbers much faster than the Hindus. Their economic condition has improved. As traders,

industrialists and merchants, they have made headway. In point of education, however, they still lag behind. Literacy among them is as low as 1 in 21 against 1 in 15 among the Hindus. While it is true that, relatively to what they were a century ago, the progress achieved has been very much greater than that of the Hindus, the community feels that it has not reached a stage where they can compete on equal terms with the Hindus.

The attitude of the Muhammadans towards the political advance of the country has been determined very largely by this consideration and Pan-Islamism. On the one hand, they feel that, being unequal to the Hindus in point of numbers and education, Self-Government may involve a further and more serious inequality in point of administrative power, and on the other, Pan-Islamism makes them demand a position in the country too far ahead of the requirements of reasonable safeguards, and claims have been put forward which are neither consistent nor fair. The safeguards they demand in provinces where they are in a minority, they refuse to concede to Hindus in others where they are in the majority. The object appears to be to gain political dominance in the outlying provinces of India, contiguous with foreign territories under Islamic rule. The Hindus rightly feel, in view of Pan-Islamism, that any surrender to this demand would make for dangerous affiliations which may reduce the Hindus as a whole to

Reason for Unfair Demands

political impotence, and endanger the integrity and unity of India as a whole.

Limits to Pan-Islamism

Pan-Islamism is useful as a safeguard against Islamic disintegration, under pressure of Western domination. Its influence on the political status of Islamic communities, now scattered under various flags, can only be indirect, arising from their mutual co-operation in their religious and moral uplift, and their return to the true spirit of Islam. As an instrument of political action, it is likely to be looked upon with suspicion and distrust, and will antagonise other communities, with whom in several countries the Muhammadans have to share a common citizenship.

Indian Muhammadans are entitled to a guarantee that any transference of political power to the people would not hinder the evolution of their community, and would not prevent them from the due exercise of their rights and responsibilities as citizens. But no claim can be entertained, which has for its object the attainment of a status which their brethren enjoy in other countries as a result of their numerical and political preponderance there.

It is to be regretted that a good number of Indian Muhammadans have not sufficiently realised their responsibilities and duties towards the political advance of the country. In the movements of the country directed towards political progress, they have been lukewarm. They have, for the most part, kept aloof from the Congress

even during the days when the Congress had for its leaders the so-called Moderates of the country.

Present Deplorable Attitude

They have sought every occasion to advance their own interests, rather than the interests of the country as a whole. Instead of seeking amicable settlement of their claims with the Hindus, they have sought settlement with the Government.

When one recalls that the present position of the Mussalmans all over the world is the result of Western pressure and their more serious grievances relate to action by one or another European power, their reliance on the British Government for the improvement of their political status is surprising. That by concessions and conciliations of their sentiment, Government would try to keep Muhammadans on their side is to be expected and is perfectly natural, but that Muhammadans should not hesitate to exploit the political necessities of the Government in their own interests is very much to be deplored. It shows how apprehensive they are of the Hindu majority.

The truth is that Muhammadans are on the wave of a reaction from a sense of decay and degradation, and ambitions and enthusiasms have been roused which are inspired by memories of past greatness rather than the realities of the present situation. In the light of past glories their present position is very low indeed, and, in their impatience to improve it rapidly, they have not been very scrupulous as to the means. But, for future harmony and peace in India, they should make common cause with the Hindus in

all legitimate attempts at securing the political salvation of the country.

The attitude of the Muhammadans and their extravagant demands have already had unwholesome reactions among the Hindus. Movements have been started among them towards better organisation in furtherance of the special interests which they believe are now threatened, and between two rival organisations, both narrow and mutually jealous, the interests of the country as a whole may suffer.

Reaction Provoked

The Muhammadans have too long avoided the road of political progress for fear of the spectre of a Hindu majority. They fail to realise that against it they have, as a set off, their unrivalled sense of brotherhood and solidarity, and their readiness to suffer, which will be a powerful factor in overcoming any opposition to their legitimate advance. As stated earlier, it helps the more unscrupulous members of the community to bully and wrong innocent Hindu villagers, and the spirit is not going to fail them where justice is on their side.

Innate Strength of Indian Muslims

Nor is the political opportunism, which has helped them to secure concessions and privileges, very much to the credit of their intelligence and political sagacity, for the opportunism has not been theirs so much as of the rulers. They have been rather the victims. The minor concessions, that they are able to secure from time to

time, only render it more and more difficult to obtain the larger concessions on which one day they must set their hearts. Mir Jaffer's defection caused Sirajuddowlah's ruin, but paved the way for his own.

The Way of Danger

Fortunately for the country there are high-minded and far-seeing men in the community, who would not, for the sake of a temporary gain, forego a permanent good, and who set above their own interests the interests of the country. The true spirit of Islam animates them, the spirit of enterprise, resolution, charity and tolerance which, in its days of glory, blew as a breath of fresh air over oppressed populations of three continents, and it is to be hoped, in the pursuit of a goal common to both, they will join hands with the Hindus and contribute to the movement, not alone the strength of their numbers but their undaunted courage and their passionate devotion.

The Future

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25. THE INDIAN STATES

Ignored for a Long Time—Their Importance and Variety—Personalities of the Princes—Progressive Administration—An Apparent Paradox—Its Explanation—Indian Development of Kingship Arrested and Diverted—Stunted Outlooks—Failure of Western Training—Stages in British Policy—Interference in Internal Affairs—Shallow Argument of Compensation—The Residents' Ways—Arrogance—'Insane Imperialism'—Change to Conciliation—Attitude of Princes—A Grave Danger The Problem to be Solved—Way to Solution.

IN discussions relating to the political advance of India it was the custom, until not very long ago, to leave out of consideration the Indian States. To the British public the bejewelled Indian Princes appear no more than survivals from the Arabian Nights, spending their days in semi-somnolent ease and their nights in dissipation amidst a multitude of wives. The Indian politicians have enough and more to think of the complexities of political progress of India to bother themselves about Indian Princes, and are tempted to ease their minds with the reflection that, after all, their territories are under Indian direction. Nor have the Indian Princes done much, until very

Ignored for a Long Time

recently, to keep the Indian public informed of their special interests. Whatever representations they have made have been through confidential official channels. Accounts connected with them and their affairs have almost always related to their costly Durbars, their lavish hospitality, their expenditure on costly luxuries or their life abroad, and the public have been lulled into the belief that the Indian States are in the secure enjoyment of all that is best in life.

The Indian Princes and their States cannot be brushed aside so easily. There are no less than 662 States covering an area of 7,12,508 square miles, and having a population of 81 millions. Two of them are as large as Great Britain. Four are of the size of Denmark, and at least 6 have the area of Wales. The revenues vary from 7 crores to a few hundred rupees. They enjoy sovereignty in varying degrees, from independence, subordinate to the suzerain power, to little more than an empty title. With at least forty of the more important ones the relations of the Imperial Government are governed by treaties, and the rest have had protection guaranteed to them though not specifically in treaties.

Their Importance and Variety

The Princes themselves are from houses that can date their origin many centuries earlier than the bluest blood of English aristocracy. They are drawn from the very best of the many races of India. In spite of their education on Western lines, they still continue to discharge

faithfully the religious duties laid on them, often putting themselves to very great inconvenience and expense. It will be recalled that the Maharaja of Jaipur felt it necessary, for the strict observance of his religious obligations during his visit to London for the coronation of 1906, to charter a whole steamer to provide himself during the journey with all the requirements of his orthodox life, from Ganges water to milk from Indian cows. Even those who have had education in public schools and universities of England, both Hindu and Muhammadan, are particular in the strict adherence to the elaborate customs and ceremonials followed by their ancestors. The Hindu Princes still venerate the Brahmins and have still the greatest reluctance to confirm sentences of death, and in one State Brahmins are still exempt from that punishment.

Personalities of the Princes

In some of the States as Mysore, Travancore and Baroda, the administration is conducted on much the same lines as in British India, and they have kept pace with it in regard to political reforms. In respect of industrial regeneration and education, Mysore, Travancore and Baroda spend, relatively to their revenues, much more than British India, and Mysore spends more than others. The entire administration of this State is animated to a man by the desire to see the State advance to the highest level of progress. In the States in North India, with

Progressive Administration

a few exceptions, the advance made has been but little.

An Apparent Paradox

It may appear as a strange circumstance at first sight that, in spite of the survival in these days of the traditional methods of Government in most of the States, there is less of political ferment there than in British Provinces. What there is of it is rather a reaction of the people from the effect of political agitation in the British territories surrounding them. It would appear that the prospect of British Provinces being granted Self-government has stimulated a similar ambition in at least some of the States. But the Princes, long accustomed to look upon political movements in India with indifference, are now apprehensive, on the one hand, of their subjects copying the methods of political agitation in British India, and, on the other, of the possibility of their having to submit to the democratic direction of a Self-Governing India.

One would normally expect that the confessedly more despotic rule of the States should precipitate political ferment first there, and the infection should spread from them to the British Provinces, in which the Government have been moving relatively very much more rapidly in the direction of democracy. There are people who see racial antagonism in the reversal of what according to them ought to be normal sequence. If there is any truth in it, we should find the political movement very much stronger in States, with a predominantly Hindu population but under a

Muhammadan Prince like Hyderabad, and those like Kashmir which are predominantly Muhammadan but under Hindu Princes. Nor have personal rule and gorgeous ceremonial any great share in the political tranquillity of an Indian State. These by themselves are helpless to reconcile people to despotism and have not saved it in the past.

Its Explanation

The real causes have to be sought elsewhere. It has already been pointed out that Indian States are distributed along the more mountainous and inaccessible parts of India. Compared to British Provinces, they are less fertile and less populous. The manufacturing centres and highways of commerce are in the main outside their territories. Furthermore, indigenous rule has affected but little the traditional order of society. A healthy middle class has yet to arise with strength and resources to bid for political power. The hereditary connection of families and classes with the ruling houses and the administration has been continued as far as possible, and ties of loyalty and common interests have been maintained. Nor has the administration been allowed to degenerate into a soul-less mechanism divested of personal touch and knowledge. Even in the most progressive of administrations there has been a greater liberality of interpretation of rules and a greater desire to adapt them to local circumstances. The State officers have usually social influence, independent of their official authority and prestige. The correspondence of social with the official hierarchy makes rules and regulations less obnoxious and

submission to authority more easy. There is poverty in the same degree or worse in the States, but there are too many acts of charity and other manifestations of good will on the part of the Princes for the people to lay it at the door of their rulers. Indigenous institutions like *panchayats* are respected and there has been little of over-Government.

It will now become obvious why the unrest such as it is in the Indian States is to be noticed mainly in those States where in point of population, resources and administration, the conditions approximate most closely to those of British Provinces. The popular movement is strong in Mysore, Travancore and Baroda and a few other States. In the rest, the reaction of the political movement in British India is more on the Princes than on the people.

Had the Princes been given a training and education more in consonance with the environment in which they have to live, and in harmony with their traditional duties and responsibilities, there would have been, along with the negative advantages of indigenous rule, constructive developments that would have taken the evolution of Indian Kingship, from where it was left a thousand years ago, to further stages of progress. The States would have progressed not in blind imitation of British India, but more in accordance with the high ideals which Indian scriptures have set before Hindu Kings. Between the Princes and people, there would have been no alienations.

Indian Development of Kingship Arrested

On the other hand, both would have been bound by the closest ties of affection, and many an indigenous institution, now in ruin and decay, would have revived and flourished in harmony with modern requirements, but in accord with the genius of the people. Far from Indian States copying British India, the latter would have had valuable lessons to learn from the way the States were managed.

It was not realised by the British that their conception of sovereignty was opposed to the spirit and genius of Indian culture. The State was not absolute in India and the Sovereign was not the source of Law. The King's duty was protection and the maintenance of *Dharma*. A number of local and communal institutions, each functioning independently in its own sphere, left the King only powers of protection and the maintenance of these institutions in their proper relation to the King and to one another. The virus of absolutism of the British infected the Indian Princes whose attitude towards the people and their institutions became much the same as that of the British to those under them.

And Diverted

The tendency has been to Westernise the Indian Princes in their outlooks, ideals and habits. Their training and bringing up were mostly under the direction of European teachers. They were encouraged to mix in European society almost to the exclusion of Indian society, to dance with European women, and to take to polo, cricket and horse racing. Except for the traditional

observance of religious ceremonial, there is little in the life of the modern generation of Princes which is not superseded by Western thought and Western habit. A number of them find a stay in the West more congenial and, when they are at their capitals, their time is so much taken up with the society of European friends and in the amenities of life their society provides, that they have little time to devote to the administration of their states.

To realise the high ideals of Indian Kingship, *viz.*, the maintenance of *Dharma* or the discharge of duty, both the king and the people have to be in the matrix of a common culture, both nourished from the same source, and both vibrating in unison to the same sentiments and the same feelings. A Western training under Western direction, more often than not premature when the roots have not struck deep into the soil of their own culture, creates interests, habits and outlooks which are fatal to the due discharge of these higher functions, without which an Indian Principality has little justification for independent existence and is best merged in British territory. The introduction of compulsory education, industries, railways and telegraphs have their place in the development of the States, but what they need more than these is the moral regeneration of their peoples, the removal of cankers that are eating into society, the initiation of reforms that will restore personality and courage to the people and

Stunted Outlooks

will revive their arts and sciences, and it could be effected only by sympathy born of true appreciation.

What was apparently hoped for from the Western training of the Princes was that it would make them proof against the many unhealthy influences of their palace, and wean them from the enervating luxuries there. These hopes have not been fully realised. What the training has actually done is to add another set of tastes and luxuries to the one that already existed, and to widen the range of satisfaction. It was not realised that customs, traditions and observances of Royalty are the strongest of all, and a few years of Western training under Western guidance would not make for their supersession and final overthrow. The old ones were continued, and new ones were added. The Princes purchased Rolls Royce cars, but retained their elephants.

Failure of Western Training

The results of Western training would have been less baneful, had their sense of responsibility as Rulers of their people been developed and perfected. The policy in this respect was even more short-sighted. The attitude of the British Government has varied so much from time to time, and has been so inconsistent that the only one principle that could be deduced is that, no matter how substantial the interests of the States, they had to be subordinated or sacrificed to the interests of the British. With the evolution of a trading corporation into suzerainty, the character

Stages in British Policy

of the dealing altered. They sought privileges and rights from the princes, and the princes have now to seek them. When the dominion was small and was liable to overthrow or conquest by powerful rivals, the British adopted the policy of what Lee Warner calls the Ring Fence, under which the line of defence was the boundary of the neighbouring rulers and not their own, and, though undertaken by the British, was financed by the rulers. That is to say, the expense of the wars, essentially for their security, was borne by the neighbours. When the dominion increased in size, the Ring Fence yielded place to the Subsidiary policy. By maintaining a subsidiary force in the territories of the princes who accepted them, the more formidable powers in India like the Marathas were isolated, and their alliance with others prevented. This was preparatory to their overthrow. When this was accomplished, the policy changed to 'subordinate co-operation'. The next stage was soon reached of wholesale annexation under Lord Dalhousie. The Mutiny that followed, opened the eyes of the British to the unwisdom of extinguishing Indian rulerships, and steps were retraced. The Princes were guaranteed protection and the strict fulfilment by the Crown of the treaty obligations.

These changes in the policy are the inevitable accompaniments of the growth of a trading corporation into a suzerain power. Unfair use has been made of the provisions of the treaties, dictated by political or financial

necessity. But in the internal government of the States, there was very rarely any interference. Even the annexationist Dalhousie insisted on the internal government of the country being left alone, unhampered and uninfluenced.

As long as the British were concerned with trade and dominion, the policy of non-interference could be adhered to without much difficulty, even though there were serious lapses to the discredit of the British. But a scientific exploitation of the resources of the country, and an equally scientific plan of consolidation were bound to bring the interests of British India in conflict with those of the princes and their States. Strategic lines of railway could not recognise the frontiers of Indian States. Portions lying in them could not be surrendered to their jurisdictions. Posts and telegraphs, valuable means of communication, could only remain under the control of the suzerain power. A different kind of currency for each State is a hindrance to trade, and most of the States had to part with the highly valued privilege of separate coinage. When the automatic currency had to be converted into a managed currency, the States had no voice in the management, and the profits of exchange and coinage went to the treasury of British India. Salt was a monopoly of the British. States which had salt beds or salt lakes had to forego the manufacture of the article and the profits from it, or lease lands containing them

Interference in Internal Affairs

to the British. Customs duties began to be imposed in the interests of revenue. Though the people of the States consumed a portion of the goods so taxed, their legitimate claim to a share in the yield has not been recognised.

It has to be conceded that a policy of economic development and political consolidation, on which the suzerain power embarked, rendered inevitable the encroachments on the sovereignty of the States. At the same time, in all justice and fair play they should have been clearly compensated.

Shallow Argument of Compensation

The argument ordinarily advanced that the States are amply compensated by their protection from external agression will not stand examination. In the first place, long before these sources of possible revenue were annexed, protection had been guaranteed, and had been undertaken in return for the surrender of a substantial right of independence, *viz.*, the direction by the State itself of its foreign relations. The object of every treaty entered into with the States was primarily their political isolation and their loyalty to the British. A protection guaranteed on these specific terms cannot be held as compensation for surrender, made very much later, of sources of revenue which were a reserve for States by no means economically so well off as British provinces. Secondly, protection is adequately financed by the subsidies and tributes, and by the maintenance of over 50,000 troops by the States themselves, which

are and have been at the disposal of the British Government for Imperial purposes.

The encroachments on sovereign rights and sources of revenue, which have no justification—economic, political or contractual—are in themselves sufficient to atrophy the sense of responsibility of the princes. The presence of a Resident at the capitals of the States has been another cause for grave dissatisfaction.

The Residents' Ways

The large powers, with which they were entrusted, were liable to be exercised without due regard to the prestige and position of the princes. The Residents were far too often obsessed with their own prestige as the representatives of the suzerain power and were too bureaucratic in habit to reconcile themselves to the ways of indigenous administration. The Indian way of doing things was not the European way, and over-zealous Residents, accustomed to British methods, may find a hundred things done in ways which they dislike. The administrative machinery of Indian States is not the same as that of British provinces, and, without a radical alteration, any interference at the Resident's end of the mechanism makes for faulty adjustments all the way down. Questions are asked, explanations and conciliations follow, and orders, submitted for approval or even for information, may have to be modified or withdrawn. A certain Residency insisted on being informed of every appointment of Rs. 100 and above.

This is the very negation of responsibility. The Princes have not been made to feel that the responsibility of Government is theirs. On the other hand, their main anxiety was to see, not that their administration and policy were beneficial to the people, but that they were in accord with the views of the Resident. In almost all differences or conflicts, whenever matters were pushed thus far, the Resident carried the day and the Princes became more and more inclined to submit to his will rather than provoke a controversy in which he was sure to win. It is small wonder then if the initiative and responsibility of the Princes have weakened, and they have become more and more inclined to remain in passive acquiescence.

But the Residents have been not only autocratic but often arrogant. They thought nothing of interfering in the household affairs of the Prince. One Resident made himself obnoxious to the Nawab of Oudh by fixing the number of horses the Nawab should have and the dishes to be cooked for his table, and Warren Hastings had to recall him. As late as 1872, King Edward, then Prince of Wales, wrote as follows to Queen Victoria his mother: "What struck me forcibly was the rude and rough manner which the English political officers (as they are called, who are in attendance on native chiefs) treat them. It is indeed much to be deplored and the system is, I am sure, quite wrong."

Arrogance

If the sense of dignity and nobility of the Princes would allow it, each one of them could give a long tale of humiliations and indignities to which, more thoughtlessly than otherwise, Residents have subjected them.

Nor have Viceroys been altogether free from blame in this respect. Lord Curzon's was the most notorious instance. His installation speeches were rather lectures and were widely resented. At the installation of the Nawab of Bhawalpur, he went so far as to declare "that the sovereignty of the Crown is everywhere unchallenged. It has itself laid down the limitations of its own prerogative".

"Insane Imperialism"

Lord Curzon's declaration at Bhawalpur was the climax of a policy, which had long been in the making in the political department of the Government of India, under which Indian States were to be so many departments, and the Princes were to exercise powers which were assigned to them. Fortunately for India and for the Princes, what Morley called the 'Insane Imperialism' of Lord Curzon ceased with his Viceroyalty. The spirit of the people had been roused and movements towards the political salvation of the country had been considerably strengthened. The policy of the next Viceroy was to retain the more moderate elements on the side of the British, and the Princes were now remembered as friendly allies and not as schoolboys to be lectured. On important issues

relating to the country, Lord Minto consulted them, a step which was altogether wholesome in its effects. He showed marked consideration to the Princes, and made many friends among them. The altered policy encouraged the Princes to reclaim much of their lost status and prestige.

Change to Conciliation

It was fortunate for the British that a policy of conciliation had been adopted. For, when the War broke out not long after, the Princes sprang to the side of Britain, and the long list of offers of men and munitions announced, astonished Britain and the world at large. The Princes had proved in abundant measure their ingrained loyalty. Thereafter, their status and importance were increasingly recognised, sentiments were respected, and their wishes consulted.

It was during this period of reviving sense of power and prestige, that the demand of British India became insistent for Self-government. It was natural that the Princes, already determined to secure their privileges and powers long ignored or belittled, should contemplate their position in the event of the country being granted Self-government. To free themselves from the vexatious interference of the Resident and the departmentalism of the Political Secretary of the Viceroy, they had already set their hearts on their subordination direct to the Crown.

Attitude of Princes

Apprehensive now of the democratic and plebian direction of a self-governing British India, what was thought of as a convenience became a settled policy. Their treaties and engagements have now been interpreted as having been with the Crown, and the authorities are half inclined to accept this interpretation.

The move would, however, further complicate the problem of Self-government, already complicated enough. An Indian India acknowledging subordination to none but the Crown and British India granted Self-government would reduce India to the position of a double-headed monster.

A Grave Danger

Self-government for India would be wholly unworkable, and, if it ever worked, the Indian States could not possibly be under the Crown. The most glorious achievement of the British, what they can point to with pride, the one thing which rendered the political evolution of India to Self-government possible, *i.e.*, the political unity of India would be set at nought. The primary condition of all progress in India—material and moral—without which it cannot be achieved, will have disappeared.

No matter what the Princes or the people of India have to forego, the political unity of India must be the paramount consideration. Statesmanship cannot be so bankrupt either in India or in England, that a scheme of substantial advance of Self-government for British India cannot be devised without prejudicing the interests

of Indian Princes, and, at the same time, without imperilling the political and geographical unity of the sub-continent. The truth is that the Indian intelligentsia have set their hearts on the apparatus of Western Government, and the Indian Princes are apprehensive of the consequences of that form of Government in two-thirds of India on the one-third under them. With the British in authority, the inevitable balancing of political forces would continue, and they would more often be on the side of the Princes than the opposite side. It has been so in the past, and it will be so in the future. But with British India granted Self-government, there will no more be a third party to hold the scales even. Who is to prevent the democratic wave overflowing into their domains? What may not their own people do to open the flood gates? It is not to their interest; nor is it the conviction of the majority among them that the Western form of Government is the best suited to Indian conditions. It is, therefore, no matter for surprise that the insistent demand of British India for self-government has not deterred the Princes from claiming what is wholly irreconcilable with that demand, *viz.*, their subordination direct to the Crown.

The Problem to be Solved

The solution of this conflict would appear to be in the direction of Indians and Britishers alike giving up their prepossession in favour of Western forms of Government, and their ceasing to entertain the fallacious idea that advance to

national government must necessarily lie along the road of democracy. When what is now obscuring thought and clouding vision is once removed, the problem can be solved in a way which will enable the Princes and people of India to co-operate honourably and with mutual esteem and goodwill in a scheme of Government which will ensure the advance of India as a whole in consonance with her genius and civilisation.

Way to Solution

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26. INDIAN NATIONALISM

A Western Development—In its First Stage yet in India—Liberty First, Democracy Next—The Indian Position—An Important Difference—Wider Scope of Politics in the West—Indian Evolution, Unity in Diversity—Joint Family—Politics Limited in Scope—Duty before Right—Indian Personality—Indian Civilisation—The British Acquisition and Rule—Imposition of an Alien Civilisation—Consequent Dislocations—Genesis of National Forces—Democratic Leanings—Imitation Fundamentally Unsound—Democracy Found Wanting—Limited Opportunities in India—The Way for India and of India.

THE subject of Indian Nationalism is difficult to deal with. What is commonly spoken of as Nationalism in political parlance is a Western concept, intended to designate forces which have arisen in the course of evolution of societies in the West. It is, as will presently be seen, applied inaccurately to forces arising in societies constituted on very different principles. In the West, tribes settled as agriculturists and lived in friendliness and harmony until they found themselves dominated by a militaristic race and reduced to slavery or what amounted to it. The oppressions they had to endure successively as slaves, serfs,

A Western Development

villeins, tenants, and lastly, as factory labourers, developed forces directed towards emancipation which was secured by suitably altering from time to time the form of Government, and broadening the bounds of liberty. The whole movement was for sharing in the immunities and privileges enjoyed by the dominant classes. The emancipation at home was followed by the enslavement of other peoples abroad. It is in this second stage of evolution, when they began to settle in or dominate the territories annexed, that the national idea in its modern sense is fully developed.

The dominating idea during the first period was the extension of liberty and citizenship to all classes at home, and during the second, the denial of it to subject peoples abroad for purposes of exploitation. Western democracies are now, in respect of coloured populations under them, in the position of the so-called democracies of ancient Greece and Rome, and the subject races, in respect of liberty and citizenship, in the position of the slaves in those republics, with this difference that the progress of science and discovery and of political insight has limited dominance to essentials, and masked it under deceptive words and phrases such as Trusteeship, Whiteman's burden, etc. The nationalism of the subject races is still in the stage where it has to release itself from the dominance of the exploiting conquerors, and even this is true only to a limited extent, for, the

In its First Stage yet in India

domination being exercised by a race who could not or would not settle in the country, the movement is not to share with but to wrest from them the power and privileges that they are denied. It is, however, still in this first stage, and it is necessary to stress this point because the prevailing idea appears to be that nationalism has already reached the second stage of evolution, and therefore requires a form of government which is adapted to that more advanced stage.

Liberty First, Democracy Next

The first duty of a nation, awakened to a sense of political subjection, is to win liberty. The extension of it to the classes is a later achievement. History furnishes no example of any people who won and extended liberty to all classes at the same time. Such a course is illogical and absurd. It renders the task doubly formidable, and therefore impossible of achievement, for disagreements as regards distribution may prove fatal to common action without which the prize cannot be won.

The Indian Position

In India, while the national sentiment in so far as it seeks to release the country from foreign domination is extremely strong, the forces required to secure an equitable distribution of political power do not exist in the requisite degree. To effect a horizontal distribution of power there are enough forces. The three major communities will insist on an equitable share as between themselves. And perhaps also the depressed classes, who have greater need of safeguarding their interests. In

the West, political power gradually descended step by step along the various strata of society, and it has reached the lowest stratum already in some of the countries. In India, there is little demand yet for the vertical distribution. Such as there is, is due to British individualism releasing communities from their ordered place into a common competition and dissolving away the ties of the Joint family.

An Important Difference

The communities and castes are still so attached to their distinct identity that they want to retain it within the charmed circle of privilege and power. In other words, the struggle for political power is between communities rather than classes or individuals. In the West, political equality was sought not so much to preserve distinct social identity as to merge it in that of those in power.

Wider Scope of Politcs in the West

The next important point relates to the strength of political forces. In the West, it depended on the fierceness of the struggle for existence. The niggardliness of nature and the coldness of climate made existence a matter of hard toil and endurance. Added to these were exclusions and misappropriations of a dominant race. To a people who believed in the dualism of good and evil, God and the Devil, Beauty and Ugliness, there is nothing unnatural or inconsistent in a division of society into master and slave. The life of the slave was dominated in its entirety, and the movement for emancipation was proportionately strong. Through political liberty

had to come all the liberties, religious, social and economic, and political liberty became a passion with the oppressed classes.

In India, the conditions of life were much easier, and it was not necessary to carry the misappropriations and exclusions by the dominant race to the same extent. Nor was it possible. The country was a sub-continent with too many races differing widely from one another, and, in the absence of physical barriers, too little isolated to develop into independent nations as in Europe. The vastness of the country made for many governments, but its geographical unity demanded one government. In these conflicting circumstances, India had to rest content with the unity of a segmented animal with a succession of similar parts. The direction of social evolution was towards a common culture to which the autonomy of independent tribes was subordinated, and of political evolution towards a central power the suzerainty of which had to be acknowledged by the numerous kingdoms.

Indian Evolution

Unity in Diversity

Of these twin problems, the social was the more urgent. For, the races compelled to live together in close proximity, all would have descended to a common level, and the excellences of the superior classes would have been lost. The races were brought together, therefore, on the principle of distinct identity but limited autonomy, were made interdependent by a differentiation of functions and were reconciled

to the functions assigned to them by the economic doctrine of limited competition, the philosophic theory of the validity of all forms of worships and creeds, and the religious doctrine that the character of past lives determines the character of the present.

This harmony of races was rested even more securely on the harmony and concord of the Joint family under which the members of consanguineous families, living under one roof on the principle of all for each and each for all, had the range of human affections and sympathies extended beyond the narrow circle of the individual family, and were trained in the qualities of understanding, tolerance and forbearance which, as is obvious, are essentially the qualities which can make racial harmony endure.

Joint Family

The cardinal principle of Hindu evolution having been the perception of a unity beneath diversity, political bondage did not as in the West connote economic, social or religious bondage, and therefore, could not rouse forces of reaction of the same range or intensity. Indeed, the functional differentiation of society involved the assignment of governance to a particular caste, in which it was not liable to interference as other castes were not liable to interference in the discharge of the duties assigned to them. There could, therefore, arise no demand for a share in political power enjoyed by the group. Nor did political power remain long in the group. The

Politics Limited in Scope

admission of non-Aryans profoundly altered the situation. With an Aryan caste in possession of political power, and with other castes of the same race entrusted with the more respectable functions of society, the non-Aryan castes, admitted into the fold and assigned the less respectable of the functions, would have speedily been reduced to the position of slaves, and the State would have become an oligarchy. To prevent that from happening and to hold the scales even between all castes, it was necessary that the governing authority should be centered in the king and not in a caste. Sudra kings did not escape the influence of the predominant Aryan castes, and to that extent the development of the Sudra castes has been hindered, but, viewing Indian History as a whole, their admission into the Hindu fold, in common subjection to the king along with Aryan castes, prevented forces of liberation arising among them, such as those that arose among the slaves of Rome and Greece.

Duty before Right

Duty rather than Right has been the regulating principle of Hindu polity. Individuals as well as castes have been rather bound together by mutual obligation and service than repelled by mutual encroachment and trespass. Religion, Education and Art alike have induced them to prefer the elevating influence of the performance of Duty to the selfishness of a struggle for Rights. And under the principles of caste organisation and Joint family there has been too little of the

fierce struggle for existence to rouse the more active powers and the more manly virtues which, for all its debasing and brutalising tendencies, present the better side of stark competition, and which are in any case indispensable to a democracy.

Under the deep tranquillities of life thus assured, the Indian dwelt rather in idea than in fact, the family rather than the State, and in the soul rather than the mind. Eternity and the universe have been the perspectives in which he has viewed life and this world. It is no matter for astonishment, if he has not allowed material progress and worldly achievement to absorb all his energies.

Indian Personality

Indian civilisation is thus the antithesis of all that Western civilisation stands for. It represents a philosophy, a scheme of life, and a social order, which the West failed to evolve, in which, man, detached, elusive and cold prefers the hunger of the soul to the tumult and shouting, and the transitory rejoicings in the splendour of passing things. It knows none of the deliriums and the brutalities, and neglects the subsidences and upheavals, the regroupings and reshufflings, the temporary makeshifts and adaptations, and the disturbed equilibriums which make life perpetually absorbed in the concerns of this world. It has penetrated too far into the inner reality of things to believe in any illusions or enchantments. It is

Indian Civilisation

suggestive of the tranquillity of deep waters rather than the rush and roar of the cataract.

These features of Hinduisation made for deep tranquillities in Hindu society, and the establishment of an empire was facilitated to that extent.

Under Islamic Rule

But the empires established on several occasions failed to endure long, and in the absence of a central power, efficient and strong, Muhammadans stept across the borders and established their rule. The political predominance of the new race with a militantly aggressive creed interrupted the process of evolution of Hindu society, but only to the extent of its political predominance and religious persecution. The Hindu social order was not affected much.

With the consolidation of British power began for the first time the erosion of Hindu society, and the subsidence and upheaval of its strata. A Christian power, committed to a policy of strict neutrality in matters religious and social, the British should have roused little opposition to its domination. The peace and

The British Acquisition and Rule

security to the country, which it guranteed for the first time, must have been particularly welcome to the distracted populations of the sub-continent, and it could have, and, as a matter of fact, has to some extent held the balance even between castes and creeds and communities, chieftaincies, principalities and states. It has developed and perfected an administration vigorous, efficient and scientific, and has passed a uniform code of laws. It has

developed and perfected communications. It has been ever watchful of her frontiers. These are services which India can never forget if she remains true to her culture. And yet, it is now face to face with a demand for freedom which pervades almost all classes and communities.

The truth is, in the aggressive self-confidence of accepted supremacy, Britain began to diffuse its own culture and civilisation through a thousand channels. It dislodged castes and communities from their ordered place and drew them into a common competition. It encouraged the people by example and by precept, by education and by law, to prefer right to obligation, contract to status, science to philosophy, intellect to emotion, mind to the soul. It failed to make allowance for the persistence of inherited aptitudes, and for the difficulty of adjusting to new and unfamiliar standards. It has tried thus to fashion life and society on principles against which India has been in permanent insurrection for ages.

Imposition of an Alien Civilisation

The diffusion of this culture, so alien to the spirit and genius of the people, has been further assisted by the growing poverty of the people. Under the enormous pressure of population on land, resulting from the ruin and decay of industries, and in the absence of openings in other countries for her surplus population, far too great a proportion of the people are finding it impossible to discharge the many obligations laid on them by caste and the Joint family.

Overcrowded Joint families have to share what little can be shared of the income from attenuated properties. The quiet and peace of the home, assured by mutual helpfulness and trust, is replaced by discord and jealousy. The son wants to help the father and mother, brothers and sisters, but has not the means. Inadequate or defective nutrition predisposes many, far too many, to disease and adds to the sufferings of the people. Religious faith still endures, but religious duties are now difficult to fulfil. Communal walls, which had protected the people from the inroads of Government authority, are no longer proof against it, and the people have been drawn in helpless subservience to the operations of a colossal machinery. Individualism is forced on them by the administration and yet, the opportunity, under which alone individualism is a virtue, is denied. Education is given, but the claims of the educated are denied. Everything has been done to destroy the social order, and obstacles are placed in the way of the formation of a new order. The deep tranquillities of life for which India had planned and organised her society are no more.

Consequent Dislocations

The disruptive forces in Indian society, which are dissolving away the fabric of Indian civilisation, were let loose partly from ignorance, partly from policy and partly from the conscious superiority of Western civilisation. The varied reactions from them represent the main ingredients of Indian

Genesis of National Forces

nationalism. There has been added recently a further element, arising from the conviction that Westernisation is ultimately disastrous to the people. The recent European War has been a revelation to Indians. It has shown to the more thoughtful that economic individualism and mechanical efficiency make the world better but man worse. The moral superiority of the West is now widely questioned, and exhibitions of racial arrogance are resented now much more than in the past.

Democratic Leanings

The demand for a Western form of government may appear to negative the conclusions of this analysis. It has to be remembered, however, that the democratic form of government proposed is, after all, a national government in the sense that national representatives will constitute the government. Secondly, with several peoples each representing a different culture to which they are passionately attached, and with the lower strata of Hindu society raised, thanks to the British, sufficiently to feel the need for the continuance of their uplift, and with the Westernised educated, enamoured of Western forms of government, the largest measure of agreement could be reached only on the basis of a Western form of government. It is apprehended too that the rulers of the country, still obsessed with the superiority of their own form of government and still claiming to be the trustees of the people, will not agree to any proposal which does not make each step to national government a step forward in democracy as well.

The imitative spirit, however, does not reckon with the sentiments and habits, the austerities and pieties which have held, and still hold together, Indian society. It has not sufficiently realised that the advance on new and unfamiliar lines would be interrupted by the antagonism between castes, communities and creeds, or that it has to make head against the old world orders and institutions strengthened by the usage of ages and reinforced by religious beliefs. It has no economic or social theory accepted by the people at large. It formulates a form of government opposed to institutions of domestic, industrial and civil life. It has failed to realise that the low standards of leisured lives will not suffice to meet the requirements of the more strenuous life which stark competition demands. It forgets that Hinduism will have to be reduced from its comprehensive vagueness to a simple creed in harmony with the altered views of life and this world. It forgets that the tenderness and intensity of family relationships will have to be sacrificed to meet the demands of self-regarding virtues, and that it has to exchange a higher for a lower plane of existence. It invites people to become democrats, who are not democrats by conviction, training or past history. It seeks to install a form of government amidst circumstances and conditions in which it is an anachronism.

Imitation Fundamentally Unsound

The whole tendency of this imitative spirit is towards a democracy. But is democracy the best form of government for all time and for all countries?

What is it else in the West but the temporary dominance of one class or interest over others, and the use or misuse of political power to its own advancement? And that competition for the misuse of political power is the expression of a fiercer competition that pervades the whole social structure. The fierce struggles for existence of individual against individual and class against class, the mutual antagonisms, the misappropriations and misuse of wealth, and the scientific frauds and swindles have produced an underworld of ill-paid, under-fed humanity, shamefully excluded from all that makes life endurable, and will not these horrors be multiplied a thousand fold in a country in which whole castes are not free to contract, neither sufficiently independent to compete? And after all, is not the best political thought in the West perceiving the folly of allowing the uninformed voter to influence judgments on problems of national welfare of very grave complexity which he is unable to comprehend?

Democracy Found Wanting

Democracies East or West, ancient or modern, have flourished on the fundamental basis of an abundance of opportunity for making wealth. The ancient democracies of India had an abundance of fertile land to satisfy the requirements of expansion and wealth. Those of Greece and Rome found their opportunities in the colonies they established, and those of Western Europe have them in the lands of the Tropics.

Limited Opportunities in India

The U. S. A. have them in their own home, and in the remaining countries of the New World. In India, the opportunities are severely limited; nor can they be created in sufficient measure to set up a universal movement upward of individuals and classes. As most of the countries of the world are not open to her for expansion, she has to rest content with the limited opportunities the country provides. If properly utilised and conserved, they may suffice for the needs of her vast populations, but they are hopelessly inadequate to speed up the democratisation of her peoples.

It is well to remember that, for all the wealth that began to pour into England from the latter half of the 16th century, and for all the expansion of her trade and the development of her industries, democracy did not begin in England until 1832, and did not fully deserve the name until the eighties of the last century. The journey of India along the road of democracy would be very much more prolonged and more tedious, and she will be harassed all along by the forces of orthodox reaction and by the uglier elements which the new and unfamiliar formula of material progress will let loose. It will take long to introduce into the castes, creeds and communities of India the homogeneity of a common economic interest and the sense of a common nationality under which alone democracy can flourish. A democratic form of Government is likely to degenerate into an oligarchy or convert India

The Way for India

into a pandemonium, unless it is adapted to Indian tradition and sentiment. In this view then, it is but appropriate that, when we appraise Nationalism and Democracy as we have done, we do not disparage a scheme of Government based upon popular will, but we only plead for less of that mercurial principle of responsible Government based really on fierce competition amongst rival parties, and more of the solid basis of stability founded on fixed executives working out stated policies in co-operation with colleagues.

And of India

The nationalism of the West emphasises a unity in externals but tolerates a diversity in internals, while that of the East emphasises a unity in internals but tolerates a diversity in externals. One proceeds from the circumference to the centre and the other from the centre to the circumference. Each may complete its journey. But the unity achieved in the East is more vital, and more spiritual, and ought not to be sacrificed for the sake of mere external unity which lowers human values and is subversive of human personality. The National Government in India should support and quicken into action the central idea of all human relationships in India, that the One exists in Many.

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27. GANDHI

A True Child of India—Appearance of Great Men—No Personal Attractions—A Gigantic and Complicated Burden—Forty Years of Vain Pleading—Imitative and Unconvincing—Power First, Policy Next—Democracy Incompatible—The Leader Wanted—Growing Resentment—To Strengthen Character—The Way of Ahimsa—Indianisation, Not Imitation—Penance—His Success—The Educated Section—Growing Convictions—The Aristocracy—His True Aim—Eminently Just—An Old Indian Principle—For All Humanity—India an Example to the World.

THE analysis of Indian Nationalism, indeed of Indian civilisation as a whole, attempted in the previous chapter would not be complete without an account of the personality and message of Mahatma Gandhi. He is the embodiment of Indian culture and genius. He exemplifies and exalts its virtues. Like a gem of purest ray serene, his personality gathers the diffused light of Indian culture, and shines in mellowed brilliance. The child of Indian civilisation, its truest and best, he is nursing it back to vigour and strength, and does so at the cost of his own life. He has inspired millions and transformed them into heroes.

A True Child of India

No prophet in the whole history of the world has within his own lifetime influenced the lives of so many millions.

It seems easy to explain a phenomenon after it has occurred, to trace back from it what we believe to be the causes that produced it. But, before the phenomenon occurred, the very causes now become so obvious were not perceived, and if perceived, they were not considered as likely to produce the result. Now that Gandhi has appeared as leader, it is easy to see the circumstances which brought him to that position. They seem so obvious, and we think the circumstances have produced the man. Yet those very circumstances have been in existence, not for him only ; they have been there for many millions more. But he alone rose as a leader.

Appearance of Great Men

We see a Dictator in Napoleon concentrating all power and authority in himself scarcely ten years after a Revolution so democratic as the French, and we rest satisfied with the reflection that the confused political thought and multi-leadership of the Revolution could have produced no other result, and we are so well satisfied with the conclusion that we do not pause to enquire whether it was the circumstances that found the man or the man that found the circumstances. Great men are creators, not creatures. They are not passively carried on the shoulder of an advancing wave of circumstances and deposited on the beach of Immortals. They ride the crest of the wave to get there.

The analysis of Gandhi's personality attempted here is not so much to help the reader to understand him better, as to understand Indian Nationalism of which he is undoubtedly the moving force as well as up-builder. Many millions have their hopes fulfilled in him, and are moved to heroic action at his bidding. And he owes no part of his influence over them to the impressiveness of stature or form, to the fire of his eye or the force of his word. An emaciated frame, short of stature and soft of speech, meek and gentle, he exerts his influence through no adventitious aid of personal magnetism or dominating will. In his personality, therefore, we may successfully trace and disentangle the various forces of nationalism, for they are at their full strength in him and in none else.

No Personal Attractions

The task is easier too for a different reason. Gandhi had to shoulder upon himself the burden of rousing, directing and controlling all the forces of nationalism. On the national hero of no country has fallen a task so colossal in magnitude. For Wâshington the forces of nationalism were ready and in abundance. He had but to lead and guide them. The intellectual basis of the French Revolution had been long in the making, but the actual outburst found no trusted or masterful leader. In Cromwell, the general and statesman were united. Italian nationalism found the thinker in Mazzini, the statesman in Cavour, and the hero in Garibaldi;

A Gigantic and Complicated Burden

Gandhi has united in himself the qualities required for the satisfactory discharge of all these functions, each one of them of the greatest difficulty.

The advance to political power in India had not kept pace with the growing requirements of national consciousness and national awakening. For forty years, Indian politicians had pleaded in vain for redress of national grievances, and for more political power. Theirs was a voice in the wilderness. Their resolutions were dismissed with contempt as of no significance. There could be no other result. Although the demands of the "educated" for larger representation, a more effective voice in the Councils and for the redress of grievances were in the interests of the people, the people from ignorance or indifference were not behind them. By their up-bringing and traditions the rulers were accustomed to give importance to such representations as had popular backing. Their own people did not get their liberties for the asking. They had fought and suffered for each instalment of reform. They were accustomed to worship the Goddess of Liberty by sacrifice, and looked upon a worship by prayer alone as insincere. Small wonder if they were irresponsive to appeals from the platform. Had it been backed by political action, they would have been more considerate. But for it, the people were not with the politicians. The educated, as we have seen, were like hermit

Forty Years of Vain Pleading

crabs. The shelter of a foreign culture had destroyed the grace of form and symmetry of parts, and their identity with their uneducated fellow-countrymen lay masked beneath a form tortured out of normal shape.

Imitative and Unconvincing

Nor had the educated a formula for National regeneration that had its appeal to all classes. They waited for God-given rights and yet, the people knew of no rights which their Gods had given them. What they believed their Gods assigned to them was the fulfilment of their *Dharma*, which had more to do with Duties than Rights. A few more seats in Municipal Councils, District Boards and Legislative Councils, all working in ways unfamiliar, had no significance for them. The vote to most was a nuisance. If they were allowed freedom in their village affairs, if they could be freed from the exactions of petty officials, if they could but get an obnoxious official transferred, they would have been content. But that was not on the programme of the politicians. They appreciated their oratorical fireworks, but as fireworks. The sky illumined for them for brief moments with brilliant coruscations, only to darken again.

The leader that could rouse their enthusiasm and successfully bid them follow him had to think with them and feel with them, identify himself with them in every fibre of his being, and what chance had the Westernised politicians, preoccupied with their

professional duties, and drawn, too many of them, to politics for the standing it gave them with the Government and the intelligentsia? Even Gokhale with all his noble sacrifices, purity of motives and devotion to the national cause failed to fire the enthusiasm of the multitude. He roused the respect of the Rulers and the esteem of the educated, but not the instinctive obedience of the people. Tilak came down a step or two from the high pedestal of the Indian politician, but he worked more as a politician than as a national leader.

Previous Leaders

The truth is the politics of the country was in imitation of the politics of the Western democracies, and was therefore wholly misconceived. In the West, liberty had been won long ago, and the concern of the people was a change in the aims and policies of the Government, and not with the power to effect the change which was already there. In India, the concern of politics is with the latter and not the former. In the West, the forces arising in society struggle with one another for mastery. In India, a similar struggle is wholly premature. Such forces as arise have to be consolidated and conserved for the joint enterprise of the advance of the country to a National Government.

Power First, Policy Next

We have seen how inconsistent with the culture and genius of the people was a demand for Self-Government on democratic lines. The majority of the politicians were not prepared for the consequences it involved. An aristocratic

culture is incompatible with a democratic constitution. The latter involves the ultimate extinction of hereditary claims of every kind, and the admission of capacity and merit to every function in the State. A heterogeneity of races and creeds could not develop the homogeneity of interests and feeling required for the successful working of a democratic form of Government.

Democracy Incompatible

Democratic Government as a means of national advance had little appeal to the people, except so far as it assured a national government. The national part of it roused enthusiasm, and the anti-national apprehensions. The sanctions behind the demand were the God-given rights of humanity and the traditional love of liberty of the British. These could not carry the country very far, and the Indian leaders of the first forty years of political life found no other which had appeal beyond the educated to the mass of the people, and was consonant with the genius of the people.

A leader had to be found, who would initiate a new order of ideas and acts, who could bring to the task of national regeneration a devotion and moral elevation unsurpassed, who could inspire his countrymen by the magic influence of his spirit and life, his sublime purity and transparent sincerity, before whose mildness, simplicity and tenderness, all passions, jealousies and hatreds would calm down, whose selflessness put all selfishness and even self-wardness to shame.

The Leader Wanted

Such a one alone could be the regenerator and deliverer of India.

The prolonged subjection and over-Government, and disease and poverty had produced both physical and moral prostration. The sense of inferiority and helplessness had grown to alarming proportions. The multitude was sluggish and inert, unable to perceive the causal connection between political domination and economic deterioration, between the diffusion of foreign culture and the dissolution of family ties and obligations, between the crushing weight of officialdom and moral paralysis. Deprived of everything in which self-respect could be nourished and sustained, they could not tolerate any more the exhibitions of racial arrogance. There was growing irritation as a result which, if allowed free scope, would have led to outbursts and would have been suppressed in blood, and the failure of each would have deepened the demoralisation.

Growing Resentment

That way lay danger. What chance had a disarmed population in a fight with disciplined forces equipped with the deadliest of modern weapons? No, the people could not be allowed to spend their resentment in futile assaults and riots. The energy of national resentment was best transformed and utilised in the reinforcement of national character. The doctrine of *Ahimsa* ('Non-Injury') could effect the transformation. It was so much in keeping with the genius

To Strengthen Character

of the people, and with the culture and civilisation of the country. The doctrine was still believed. Many hundreds of thousands observed it religiously. That was the doctrine then, to prevent dangerous explosions of the national temper, the doctrine with which the new found energies could be made to reinforce character.

But the time for the practice of *Ahimsa* in nationalism is when it has begun to advance, and meets with opposition. In the preliminary stage, when the creed of nationalism has yet to be accepted, the opportunity for the exercise of it is not come. *Ahimsa* in nationalism is after all a policy, is a means to the end. But to energise a passionless population it would not avail. What if the people pleaded their present state of physical and moral prostration as an excuse for their apathy? It had to be shown to them that the lowliest and simplest of life, feeble muscles and feebler nerves were not incompatible with the highest elevation of character, and that, no matter how emaciated and feeble the human frame, it could still harbour a spirit that would accept no humiliation, no disgrace and no defeat. Gandhi physically weak himself, yet resolute, abstemious and healthy, could any plead a similar condition of the body as an excuse before him? And who was Gandhi himself? He was not certainly of the class of politicians they had heard, and heard about. Those politicians spoke eloquently. People had never heard any speak so fast and fluently as they, and they could speak

The Way of *Ahimsa*

for an hour or more, rousing from their audience applause after applause. But all their eloquence had left the country cold and irresponsive. They had spoken of what the *sircar* had to do for the people. That was all very good, but the *sircar* was ever so powerful. The pettiest officer under it put on such airs and felt so important. He could subject the wealthiest among them to inconvenience and humiliation. He could impress their carts for Government work, insist on supplies to his kitchen while on tour. He might insult them or handle them roughly. Redress from his excesses was so difficult to get. And when he, a mere official was so powerful, what about the *Sircar* itself? It was a lion, and these politicians were little mice that gnawed at its nails while it was asleep. Gandhiji was different. His words sank into them. They could not put them outside their thoughts as they could the words of the politicians. Gandhi's words echoed and re-echoed in their hearts. He too hated the *Sircar*. Why, he called it Satanic, but he would not beg anything from it. He wanted the people to help themselves. He wanted them to spin and weave their own cloth and so save the 72 crores with which, he says, the people buy every year foreign cloth. And he does not want them to buy any other thing foreign, if a substitute there is, which is Indian-made. And he forbids drink.

The fact is he wants Indians to be just Indians, nothing more or less. Did the politicians talk like him? Not they. They were so distant

from them, so different. They aped the West. Nothing pleased them so much as the privilege of moving with Europeans. They felt superior and were frigid to the common people. They shouted themselves hoarse on the platform to people educated like themselves. A number of them lived in the Western way, dressed and ate in the Western way and drank as Westerners do. And what had they done? Nothing that they knew of. The officers were just as bad as ever, and as many as ever, and the taxes are heavier than ever before.

Indianisation, Not Imitation

Gandhi was so different, but he was one with them and wanted to be one of them. He too might have lived in Western style. He had been to England and he was a Barrister-at-Law. But he discarded it all for the sake of the people. He had changed his Western dress to wear loin cloth like what they wear. He goes semi-naked as they. He has shared their food and shelter, he has travelled with them in the third class. He has "approached the poor with the mind of the poor", and made their cause his. He has done penance for their sins. What if they do not comprehend his cause, his cause must be theirs as theirs has always been his. And what is this penance? Prayer and faith, truth and non-violence, charity and forbearance.

Penance

Thus was the mass of the people attached to the sentiment of national regeneration—as will

be seen, not so much by the cause itself which they were too ignorant to comprehend, but by the devotion of the leader, the sufferings he endured and the sacrifices he made. He had converted a movement practically confined to the intelligentsia into a mass movement. He roused the tremendous energy required for a national upheaval, and himself exerted the necessary steadying influence on the wild enthusiasms and the mad passions to which the masses are liable to give way, once their slumbering energies are roused to the pitch of a national convulsion.

His Success

The influence of Gandhi on the educated was more uncertain. It varied with the extent of the sacrifice involved of habits and convictions born of Western training, and with the connection of their interests with British administration. To the extent they were Westernised, they were irresponsive to the moral and religious influence of Gandhi. They set store by machinery and were not enamoured of the spinning wheel. The interests of a great many had grown round the British connection, and a doctrine which involved the attenuation of that connection meant too great a sacrifice. Yet their resentment against the British was even greater than that of the masses. They felt more keenly the degradation of alien rule. Their own programme of national advance by petitions and representations had not carried them far during forty years, and they had failed to carry the masses with them and they felt

The Educated Section

themselves impotent without their support. They had also begun to perceive that the Western form of nationalism, on which they had set their hearts so much, might not be quite suited to India. They had begun to perceive that their trust in the good-will of the British and their love of liberty, on which they had relied for national advance, was misplaced, and they could not beat back the conviction that the sanctions of the Gandhian nationalism were in the people themselves. Except for the Liberals and for those whose interests are wholly dependent on British administration, the bulk of the educated have been swept into the eddies of Gandhian ethics, overpowered by his moral influence more than by their own intellectual conviction. Their policy had failed. Every plank in their platform was giving away. They could not claim a democratic form of Government without being reminded how incompatible it was with the institutions and culture of the people. They were not nationalists in the sense that they believed in national institutions and in national culture. Their reliance for advance to self-government was on the sense of justice of the British Government, and if that reliance proved delusive, as it was fast proving, they had nothing to fall back upon. They were too Westernised for the multitude to accept their lead, and their education was too mixed in its results for them to rely on themselves. On what reservoirs of moral strength could they draw? Not on physical strength, not on moral strength, for it could

not be sustained on a conviction of Western superiority.

On the other hand, Gandhi's appeal was to all. He believed in Indian culture, repudiated the claims of superiority of the West. The Great War had made sufficient revelations for the people as a whole to believe in his condemnation of the Western civilisation. The doctrine of *Ahimsa* was the only doctrine that a disarmed people could adopt in their march to freedom. Gandhi, as the apostle of *Ahimsa*, was a vegetarian. His dress was the simplest of Indian dress. The educated, denied equality with the ruling race, could yet claim kinship with the people. The formula of the spinning wheel, *Khaddar*, and *Swadeshi*, finds a way, tedious and difficult perhaps but still a way, out of starvation and idleness. And their own formula was of the West, of massed population and massed production with all its ugly accompaniments, which could be applied only under conditions which had for the most part to be created.

Growing Convictions

The truth is Gandhi relied on a revival to ensure survival. The doctrine of the politicians that imitation was the surest way was logically absurd. Moral strength could not be created or sustained on a policy of imitation and the educated were slowly perceiving it. They were convinced that they had to make common cause with Gandhi, if they had to win leadership. A great majority of the educated have thus accepted his creed and formula.

One of the most important elements still to be swept into Gandhi's net is the aristocracy. This class that still wields paramount social influence has yet to be won over to a cause which may leave it superseded and helpless. The aristocratic element in any society cannot be expected, unless it be as leaders, to take part in any popular movement which has for its object the re-fashioning of society on new and unfamiliar principles. Only on the assurance that, in the society and in the national government that is to be, they will have their legitimate place, will they join the movement, and the Gandhian formula does not offer that security.

The Aristocracy

Gandhi with true insight has concentrated on winning for the people the power to govern, and not on the distribution of that power. He has been silent all along on what share in political power, the classes and communities will have. If he has at any time departed from that principle, he had done so to consolidate the people and prevent the disruption of the national forces. He realises that a preliminary agreement as to the division of the spoils would render impossible the victory without which there will be no spoils to divide.

His True Aim

Gandhi's own attitude to classes and communities is a guarantee that he will not be a party to injustice to any in a scheme of national government. And the qualities which he has summoned to active effort in his followers

are such that they will, equally with him, set their face against an unjust distribution of power. And if he was overpowered in the national councils, and any class or caste stood to suffer from injustice, he would be the first to advise and lead them in resisting such injustice.

Eminently Just

The doctrines of non-co-operation and *satyagraha* are of great potency. One moralises the individual, the other seeks to moralise the individual as well as the party who offers obstacles to the realisation of the legitimate ideals he has set before him. Both rest on the conviction that there is a common moral and spiritual basis for all humanity, no matter what its culture, creed or interests, and that, by peaceful persistence and resolve to endure rather than cause suffering, the common basis, obscured by the passions and outlooks of self-interest, can be made obvious, and that classes and peoples now repelled by mutual jealousies and antagonisms can be drawn together in mutual goodwill and affection.

To the Hindus the principle is the very basis of their culture, the quintessence of its genius. Lying in the very depths of their culture, buried for centuries, this gem has been brought up to the surface by Gandhi, and if its mellowed brilliance has no charm to Indians, it is because they have been dazzled by the glare from Western lights. The ancient practice of *Dharana*, by which creditors stayed at the

An Old Indian Principle

door of those indebted to them until their debts were paid, the migration of castes from regions where they were taxed against their will, or the throwing up of their lands by cultivators to dwell in the forests with their belongings as a protest against oppressive taxation, had for their basis much the same principle (though in various grades of operation) on which now Gandhi relies as the most effective principle of political action.

For All Humanity

Gandhi's message is not for Hindus alone but to all mankind. It bids them set their face against the use of physical force for the advancement of all just causes, fill the reservoirs of moral strength by purity and selflessness, by simplicity of life and love of humanity, and draw on those for the advancement of their cause. To a world distracted by the mad passions resulting from jealousy, greed and the employment of brute force, Gandhi offers a way to peace and goodwill.

It is appropriate that the doctrine of non-violence in national causes should have taken its birth in India. India had, within her borders, the complex and intricate racial problem which confronts the World to-day. She had to evolve cohesion and harmony out of a medley of races and creeds in every stage of intellectual and moral evolution, all compelled to live side by side, and she achieved it with a fair degree of success. The problem of the World to-day is the problem of the racial contacts complicated by the shrinkage of distance and growing interdependence of the

people of the world; and the way India has solved her problem is not without its lessons to the world at large. India now bids the world through the noblest and best of her sons to discard brute force, and trust to moral persuasion, by suffering if need be, in the pursuit of all legitimate national causes, and she has herself under Gandhi's guidance set the example. She struggles for her freedom and self-expression conserving and augmenting her moral and spiritual energies, frittering away none, and submitting patiently to suffering in the full confidence that her rulers, now so absorbed in their self-interest, are not lost to humanity, and her cry will not fail to pierce their hearts.

India, an Example to the World

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28. NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION

A Civilisation at Bay—Westernisation Undesirable and Impracticable—National Government Needed—Object of a National Government—An Indian India—Place of the British—Credit due to Britain.

THE survey attempted is now complete. All the more important forces that have influenced the growth of Indian culture and civilisation have been touched upon. It has been made clear that, on the continental scale in which racial, social and political problems presented themselves in India, the line of evolution of the Indian people could have been no other than that actually followed. Had the regulating principles discovered very early in the course of Indian history strictly been adhered to, she would not have passed under foreign rule, and her civilisation would not have been imperilled as it is to-day. But the ascendancy of the static priestly class and the disappearance of the dynamic fighting caste proved fatal to the military efficiency of the Hindus, and the political unification of India was not fully and finally achieved by them. The result was that India became a prey to successive invaders, and the conquerors added additional racial elements to the

A Civilisation at Bay

population which refused to fit into the scheme of Indian culture and polity. To make matters worse, following the achievement of political unity for the first time by the British, principles and methods of administration were introduced partly from policy, and partly from the sense of superiority of their own civilisation, which acted as a centrifuge on the communities disuniting the people in all matters in which union is vital and enduring, and uniting them in others where union is at best temporary. Under the pressure of a highly centralised administration, the democracy of limited neighbourhoods and limited spheres of activity, which had acted as a set off against the absolutism of Royal power, has given way. An economic individualism, unchecked by the duties and responsibilities of citizenship, has played havoc with the virtues on which Indian civilisation has developed, and the situation has been aggravated by the growing poverty of the people. But for what remains of communal institutions, preserved from the onrush of new forces, the people are deprived of every shred of independent activity, and live truncated lives, unable to exercise virtues dear to them and prevented from the cultivation of new ones. The whole civilisation is thus brought to bay.

The conditions of the country and of life are not of the West, and cannot be made to approximate to those of the West. The distinct identity of each community is so jealously guarded that the homogeneity of interests, on which alone

a Western form of Government can successfully function, is yet far from realisation. There are whole classes and communities, for centuries forced to accept low standards of life and to cultivate habits of dependence and subordination, who will suffer from unrestricted competition, and in the keen struggle for existence that will ensue, the charity and humanity, on which they have so long relied, would, under the forces of self-interest released, be things of the past, and they will sink down further, exploited and neglected. And there is little in the climate of the country to stimulate them to effort. On the other hand, the simplicity of life and the indisposition to work will conspire to depress further the margin of starvation. There is the more reason for thinking so, because the conditions required for the upward movement of strata are very much more limited than those on which democracies have been built up in the West.

Westernisation Undesirable and Impracticable

In these circumstances, a democratic form of government is wholly unsuitable. What the country needs is a national government, which will subserve national interests, and which, with a true measure and mastery of the forces at work, will utilise them to the best advantage of the people. The existing Government is incapable of effecting national regeneration and national consolidation. None will question the perfection of its machinery. The experience and intelligence of

National Government Needed

successive administrators of the highest ability have gone into the making of it. It has made its power and authority felt in the remotest corner of India. But it serves national interests only so far as they are not prejudicial to the interests of the British, and the interests of the British in India are not so much the interests of Government as of exploitation. Secondly, their authority, being derived from an external source, descends down to the very depths of society, not checked or moderated at each stage by any authority derived from the people. What there has been of democratic advance has been designed more as a safety-valve to prevent explosions of the national temper than to conciliate or assist the National spirit. In these circumstanees, all that is necessary is that the Government should be so constituted that it subserves national interests and the parasitic roots of an overgrown bureaucracy which have penetrated deep into the cells of national life are cut off.

Government is not an end in itself; it is a means to an end, and the end of national government in India is not so much progress as regeneration, not so much to guide energies along useful lines of national activity as to rouse them, not the creation of facilities for the production of wealth but the fostering of the enterprise and resolution required for its vigorous pursuit. To revive and restore the personality of the Indian now lying crushed and broken under the dead weight of officialdom, to soothe and restore to action

Object of a National Government

nerves long paralysed, to make him realise that he has something to live for and a part to play, —this is the primary need of the country. It demands of those to be in authority, qualities of insight, sympathy, understanding and humanity. They are virtues fortunately cultivated in India for centuries, but they should not be superseded by the narrow outlooks and passions which a prematurely introduced democracy is bound to let loose.

An Indian India

For the sake of her own tranquillity and for the sake of the tranquillity of the World, India should remain India regenerated, revived and restored, but still India in her grace and beauty and in her pensive refinements. In that process of revival and restoration, Indians should seek the co-operation of the British not as their masters, but as their friends. Britain has left many things undone but also done much, much that India herself might not have accomplished, and in the years to come, when the narrow outlooks and passions of the moment that sway the people subside, they should remember, if they are true to their culture, what they owe to her.

Place of the British

If they have ceased to be tolerated as rulers, they may be welcome as friends, and they make excellent friends. There are many hundreds of Britons who have been of the greatest service to Indians, and who went out of their way to do it. There will be many more

of that type ready to serve and give their best on a basis of equality and friendship. Their standards of devotion to duty and their sense of discipline and their aptitude for team work are above those of the Indian, and under a National Government, there being no room for racial arrogance and superciliousness, they would work with Indians as brethren in a common cause of National endeavour. They may have a place in India as factory managers, research workers, professors of universities, and as specialists. In these capacities they will prove to be of the greatest service, stimulating, guiding and co-operating with the people of the country during the next stage of Indian political evolution, controlled and directed by Indians themselves, for which Britain for all her faults has prepared the way.

Credit due to Britain

To Britain herself, the credit will be eternal of having set on a career of self-determined progress, a fifth of the human race. The world owes many things to Britain, far more to her than to any other country. To the long list she will add one more of having advanced to equal rank, status and independence, peoples different in colour, race and culture and thus taken the first and most substantial step to a world federation.

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APPENDICES

A.—A PROVISIONAL SCHEME OF GOVERNMENT

The first concern of national government should be to give back to the people the freedom from interference which they have enjoyed in the management of their local affairs. The village assemblies should be revived and should elect their headman and their village accountant. The headman should have civil and criminal jurisdiction to a certain limit. His decisions should be subjected to the scrutiny of a Justice of the Peace, selected by a group of villages for a period of years from among the men of light and leading in the locality. The village assemblies should be entrusted with the management of a Primary School, the maintenance in good repair of village roads, village tanks, village wells, village temple, and village hall. The village assembly should be entrusted with the collection of all taxes due from the village. It should be liable to fines for failure to discharge any of the duties entrusted to them. Village assemblies should be entitled to subsidies for certain specific items of village improvement, as sanitation, water supply, etc. They should have powers to levy taxes on specified items of property or income.

Village Autonomy

The District Boards will have much the same powers and privileges they have at present. But half the number of seats will be reserved for members elected by the village assemblies, each assembly having only one vote, a quarter elected by the municipalities and a quarter reserved for special interests, partly filled up by recognised associations and partly by nomination. The chief officers of the District Board will also have seats but will have no vote. The control of secondary and technical education, the maintenance of hospitals and dispensaries, medical and veterinary, Travellers' Bungalows, and rest houses, of roads and bridges, the conduct of festivals and fairs, the control of epidemics, famine relief work and etc.

District Boards

will be among the more important of their functions. Their income will be derived from cesses and subsidies and from tolls and ferries, etc. Only those who have a certain standing as a result of their education, property or their public service will be qualified for election, and each municipality and each assembly will have one vote.

Provincial Legislatures

The provincial legislature may be constituted on the same lines as at present, and may have much the same powers. Election of members will be by the individual vote of village assemblies, of municipalities and of District Boards. There should be adequate representation for Muhammadans, Christians and Harijans. Diarchy must be abolished. The ministers must be responsible to the legislature and should be removable by its vote. The powers of restoration of grants vested with the Governor should be abolished. The Governor's veto should be restricted to matters affecting peace and tranquillity, or prejudicial to the interests of minority communities.

The Princes

Irrespective of any treaty engagements, all princes who enjoy them at present should surrender their rights to separate coinage, separate post, separate customs, and there should be no compensation to them for the surrender of those rights. But subsidies will be abolished. The civil list of all princes should be fixed, and each of the states, which have not already instituted, it will have a representative assembly in which all interests and classes have adequate representation. There should no longer be any Residents at the Courts of princes. At least three of the Governorships may be reserved for members of ruling houses, who have distinguished themselves in service to the country. This privilege should be confined only to those states which have introduced representative forms of Government. The Princes' Chamber will continue. It will elect the Princes or their nominees to the Cabinet of the Viceroy. It will look after the interests special to the Princes, their status and privileges, enquire into cases of administration and report to the Viceroy for necessary action by him with their recommendations.

There should be a rearrangement of Provinces on the basis of language.

There should be a Supreme court which will decide disputes between states and provinces on the one side and Central Government on the other. The Central Assembly will draw its members from the Provinces as well as States on the basis of their population. Adequate

Central Legislature

representation should be assured to all minor communities, and special interests as commerce, industries, planting and etc. The Assembly will have a President elected by it. All matters affecting India as a whole, military and naval defence, army, foreign relations, the Central Revenue services and expenditure will be within the purview of the Assembly but their resolutions will not be binding on the executive.

Central Cabinet

The Cabinet of the Viceroy will consist of 12 members, of whom (1) five shall be elected by the provinces on the basis of one member for every fifty millions, two or more contiguous provinces being combined where necessary for the purpose ; (2) Two shall be elected by the Princes Chamber, of whom one must be a Hindu and the other a Muhammadan ; (3) Five shall be elected by all India organisations, allotted as follows :

One for Europeans.
One for Christians.
One for Depressed Classes.

Central Boards

Two for Muhammadans or Hindus or both, so as to maintain the number of Hindus and Muhammadans in the Cabinet in the proportion of 3 to 1. The Cabinet will be assisted in its decisions by the Presidents of Boards for Central Revenues, Tariff, Industries, Railways, Public Health, Rural Reconstruction, Depressed Classes and Military. These Boards will be constituted from panels chosen by the Central Assembly. For all the Boards except the Military, the Secretary will be the Head of the Department concerned, if any. In regard to the Military, the Board will have power only to scrutinise expenditure and acquaint itself with details of policy. The Presidents of the Boards will have seats in the Assembly but will not have the power to vote. The members of the Cabinet will attend the sessions of the Legislature.

In all matters excepting the Military and Defence, decisions of two-thirds majority of members of the Cabinet should be binding on the Viceroy. In all matters affecting the status or dignity of the Princes, the Viceroy may again act independently of his Cabinet. Except in regard to the status and dignities of the Princes, the status and powers of the States and the Provinces should be on the same level and will be subject to the decision of the Cabinet as a whole. In regard to the Military and Defence, decisions by

a three-fourths majority should alone be binding on the Viceroy.

Army and Militia

The army will remain at its present strength, and be of the same composition. But a national militia should be formed on the basis of one young man from every village. The training of these should be a charge on the District Boards and Provincial Governments. They should receive training on the same lines as the militia are given in other parts of the world. Those who are of the highest valour, ability and discipline should be selected for the army. Each Provincial Government and each State or a group of States will undertake to form regiments according to the number allotted to each, which, on being found up to the standard in point of discipline, training and equipment, should replace British regiments and the expenses of their training should be made good by the Central Government. Once the regiments are accepted, they become a charge on the Central Revenues.

Officers' Training

There should be an Indian Sandhurst for the training of officers. These should be recruited from among the Houses of Princes, Landed Aristocracy and from families with military traditions. They will replace British officers as they become qualified. Of the total number of places for officers, a third should be reserved for men from the ranks.

Navy

Coastal defence should as soon as possible pass to Indian hands, and adequate provision should be made for the training of men and officers. There shall be a contribution to the British Exchequer for Naval defence until such time as India can contribute units to the British Navy, manned and equipped by her.

National Research

To determine the line of Indian evolution in all spheres of national life and activity, there should be a University of National Research where the best brains of the country will devote themselves to research bearing on all aspects of national welfare. There should be the fullest provision in it for (1) research into social customs and habits of the people; (2) research into industries with a view to invention of simple machinery suitable for installation in houses, villages or groups of villages, worked by hand, small engines or electricity which will utilise the man power of the people; (3) research into the food of the people, into the Indian pharmacopea and medicines; (4) research into sanitation and public health. Full facilities should be afforded to

individuals who have problems, the solution of which has a bearing on the National welfare.

Education and Examination

Primary Education should be free, secondary and Technical education assisted, and University education self-supporting but with a liberal provision for scholarships for the brilliant poor and for members of backward communities. Admission to Government service will depend on success in examinations specially instituted for that purpose by duly constituted service commissions. A degree should be insisted on only in respect of gazetted appoinments on a pay of Rs. 250 and above.

Social Reform

Intercommunal marriages should be encouraged and legal hindrances should be removed. The possibility of forming a top layer of Indian society which draws the best elements from all communities and classes should be explored.

The lower strata of Hindu society should be trained to habits of clean living. Untouchability and unapproachability should not be countenanced in respect of any services which are performed partly or wholly at Government expense. No degradation should attach to any profession as such. The Government's duty to make special efforts towards the betterment of lower castes and wild tribes should be recognised. A Depressed Class Trust Board should be constituted with a substantial contribution from the Revenues of the country and a similar Board for rural reconstruction should also be constituted. These two latter should be non-official organisations and work by these must be done on a basis of self-sacrifice. The woman's right to an adequate share in the property of the deceased husband should be recognised.

The above is but a very rough sketch of the more important lines of National Reconstruction that is needed for the regeneration of the people and their progress in consonance with their genius and culture. In respect of educational policy and Social Reform, and the intercommunal marriages, their object has been already indicated in the appropriate place. The idea of a National Research University has been introduced for the first time, and it is necessary to state

Right Principles of Advance

that its object is to subject to scientific scrutiny all the customs and institutions, and all the arts and sciences of India. There also will be carried on research that will discover correct lines for the industrial advance of the country. In respect of all these, the judgment or experience of the West is not the criterion.

The various problems have to be solved with reference to Indian conditions which, as has been seen, are very different from those of the West.

We may now proceed to indicate the main principles that are embodied in the suggested constitution. It is necessary to emphasise that what has been described is but a very rough outline which may not stand the scrutiny of the statesman or the constitutional lawyer. If it is so, it has to be changed. But the principles embodied in it cannot be challenged, and they are set forth here in the hope that they will be widely accepted.

First and foremost is the complete freedom in the management of local affairs. This is a freedom that the people enjoyed for centuries until the encroachments of the bureaucracy rendered it impossible. The right given to village assemblies to collect taxes, subject of course to reasonable and adequate safeguards, is to prevent petty officials from taking advantage of their illiteracy, ignorance and helplessness, and secondly, to reduce the cost of collection which is as high as 15 to 17 per cent. of the amount realised. The collective vote of the village is intended to emphasize the collective responsibility of the villagers. Individual voting may develop individual responsibility but the classes who have not the requisite qualification would be ignored by those who seek election. In the village assembly all are on equal terms, and the whole of its members will have to be appealed to for their joint vote. The appointment of men of light and leading as Justices of Peace is intended to find a place in the scheme of administration for the more wealthy and educated, specially the landed aristocracy and as these are elected from time to time, the tyrannical use of powers vested in them is unlikely.

Importance of Local Autonomy

The constitution and powers analogous to those of Western legislatures are conceded only to the provincial legislatures. Nothing like them was enjoyed under indigenous rule. They have been given, nevertheless, further opportunities, within well defined limits, of democratic training. In the provincial legislatures, the fullest opportunity is provided for the communal grouping to be replaced by interest grouping for the subordination of sectarian interests to national interests, and for developing and perfecting the knowledge of the people in regard to all the complexities of modern Government. There the people will have to subordinate personalities to principles, to cultivate the responsibilities of the vote, to

Democracy in the Provinces

find a way of action between contending forces acceptable to all, and to manipulate political forces in furtherance of National interests.

The line of politics taken in the provinces will determine the ultimate constitution and powers of the Central Government. Till the provincial legislatures advance on democratic lines, the democratic principle should have no place in the Central Government. That the Cabinet of the Viceroy is composed entirely of Indians except for the one European elected by the European Association, is a guarantee that national interests will be safeguarded. The representatives of the provinces are elected and the rest also are elected though by special interests. The interests of the minorities are safeguarded by representation on the Cabinet. The Cabinet will have the benefit of advice from various Boards on all important matters, and these Boards are popular to the extent that the panels from which they are selected are drawn by the popular assembly.

The Centre Nationalised

The Princes, I believe, will not have any objection to sit in the Cabinet of the Viceroy. Such Princes alone, who have established representative institutions in their States and are in a position to delegate their powers to their heir apparent or to their Prime Minister, should be elected to the Viceroy's Council. For the surrender of certain sovereign rights, they are given ample compensation. They have the privilege of filling up three of the provincial governorships, where they will have the opportunity of acquainting themselves with the working of democratic constitutions. They will have no Residents at their courts and no subsidies. Their association in the Government of India will enlarge their outlooks and enhance their status.

Status of the Princes

The main objection to the scheme will be the reduction of the Central Assembly to a representative body. It may be deemed to cast a reflection against the leaders of the people. But no reflection is intended. The introduction of responsibility now would not be in the true national interests. When national interests are consolidated, it would be time to give scope for conflicting interests to struggle with one another to run the Government. The divisions in the country are too much on communal lines and any free scope for struggle between them would prove disastrous to the people as a whole, and to the interests of the country. Indians cannot have it both ways. They cannot, on the one hand, assert that British Government have

Importance of National Solidarity

demoralised and debased the people, and divided and ruled them, and at the same time claim a form of Government, which, for successful functioning, requires the greatest moral strength and the highest devotion to national interests. If there is truth in the assertion, there is no reason for the claim. Once national solidarity has been effected and parties no longer follow communal lines, the constitution may advance to a democratic form, if the people so desire. Till then the policy should be to ensure the balanced development of all communities on the basis of equity and fair play, checking forces that are ruinous to national interests and encouraging others that help to further and consolidate them, and such a policy cannot be carried out by an executive dominated or influenced by one party or another with communal aims. Nor can the many discordant elements in Indian polity be brought together in harmonious co-operation and in mutual helpfulness, except by a national executive of the composition and powers suggested in the scheme.

B.—GLOSSARY

AHIMSA.—Literally non-injury. It is the cardinal doctrine of Jainism and Buddhism, both of which protested against animal sacrifices. It is not mere kindness to living beings but abstinence from any sort of injury.

AINOS.—The lowest class in Japan, who are treated much as pariahs in India.

ARTHASASTRA.—The book written by Kautilya or Chanakya in the 4th Century B.C. on State-craft.

ASOKAVANA.—The garden in which Sita, the wife of Rama, was confined by Ravana the King of Lanka, who had carried her away by a deceitful trick.

ASWAMEDHAYAGA, or horse sacrifice. It was the custom for ambitious kings in Ancient India to let a horse loose, accompanied by his troops. Any other king who obstructed the progress of the horse was understood to have issued a challenge. This was a method by which a king in Ancient India asserted his supremacy over other kings. The horse wandered for a year and more and, after all the other kings had voluntarily or compulsorily acknowledged the performer's suzerainty, returned to its master who proclaimed his empire by celebrating a sacrifice. For this reason, the Aswamedhayaga was looked upon as one of those sacrifices which confirmed and proclaimed the imperial status of the performing king. Even in historical times this sacrifice has been performed by many Hindu Emperors.

AVARNAS.—Literally those without colour; the term applied by Aryans, themselves of fair complexion, to the dusky original inhabitants of India.

BHAGIRATHA.—An ancient Hindu king of the Solar dynasty. His brothers had been consumed to ashes by the angry curse of an offended Rishi, and in order to revive them, Bhagiratha was advised to bring down Ganga (the Ganges) the celestial river to the earth. He had by several prolonged austerities and prayers to please the offended Rishi, then Ganga and lastly God Siva who, being disturbed by the rush of Ganga, imprisoned her waters in the locks of his hair. Gratified

with Bhagiratha's efforts, Siva released her, and then she flowed over the ashes, resuscitating the brothers.

BHISHMA.—The grand uncle of the Kauravas and Pandavas, the contending princes of the Mahabharata. On account of a vow that he took early in life to make his father happy, he remained single to the end of his days. He fought in the war and after completing his duty, sought death.

BRAHMA.—The God of Creation, living in Satyaloka or the region of truth. In the conception of Hindu Trinity Brahma is the creator, Vishnu the preserver and Rudra the destroyer, in conformity with the three forces of Nature.

CHAITANYA—or Gauranga, a religious reformer of medieval times, who inculcated the worship of Krishna as the Lord of Love and emphasised the doctrine of devotional surrender to God. His followers are most numerous in Bengal.

CHANAKYA.—The Brahmin minister of the first Mauryan Emperor, Chandragupta, who ruled in the 4th Century B.C., and author of "Arthasastra". Before becoming minister, he had been insulted by the princes of the Nanda family who were Sudras, and therefore had sworn the destruction of the Nanda rulers. He joined forces with Chandragupta who was an exiled prince, and brought about the ruin of the Nandas by his craft.

CHIT-FUND.—A popular institution in India to which a number of people join to contribute monthly a certain sum of money; the amount so collected being made over to the man who offers to give the largest discount which is shared equally by the rest of the group. Often there is no auction system, the amount is given to the man whose name is drawn by lot.

DAMAYANTI.—The princess of Vidarbha, who fell in love with a king, Nala by name who was reported to be handsome and chivalrous. A swan carried messages to and fro and helped their mutual love to blossom. Nala married her through a *swayamvara* ceremony, and later on deserted her in a forest, being under the influence of Kali, the God of Evil. After several trials and privations they were reunited.

DASARA.—Literally ten nights; a festival observed by all classes of Hindus soon after the rainy season, *i.e.*, about the month of October. This was the occasion for Hindu Kings reviewing their troops previous to setting out on expeditions, and the custom can still be seen in the elaborate ceremonies held by Indian Princes.

DASYUS.—The term employed by the Aryans of the Vedic Age to designate the Non-Aryans. It came to mean

people dark in colour, dwarfish in stature and repulsive in customs and manners.

DEEPAVALI.—The festival of lamps among the Hindus. It comes in the month of Kartik and is observed by all classes. The Dasara* and the Deepavali are the two festivals in which Muhammadans of India also take part.

DHANVANTARI.—The God of Medicine. The story among the Hindus is that after the Flood, the ocean of milk was churned by the devas and the daityas or forces of good and evil, and of the several beings that arose from the ocean as a result, Dhanvantari holding ambrosia in his hand was one He is prayed to and worshipped as their special god by Hindu physicians.

DUBASHES.—Brokers or commission agents.

DUSHYANTA.—The royal hero of the story of Sakuntala.

DWARAPALAS.—Literally door-keepers. In temples, as in palaces, two attendants on either side,are made to keep guard.

GANESA.—The elephant-headed god of the Hindus, called variously as the lord of obstacles, the lord of *ganas* or groups of creation. He is first worshipped in all religious observances of the Hindus. Ganesa is the son of Siva and Parvati.

GAUTAMA SUTRAS,—*i.e.*, tne aphorisms af Gautama, one of the ancient jurists of the Hindus.

GITA OR THE BHAGAVADGITA,—literally, the Lord's song. It is one of the sacred books of the Hindus and looked upon as an authoritative exposition of Hindu religion and philosophy. It consists of a little over 700 verses and is believed to have been delivered by Sri Krishna, the eighth incarnation of God Vishnu, to Arjuna just before the commencement of the battle in Kurukshetra described in the Mahabharata. Arjuna had his preceptor, uncles, cousins and other relatives opposed to him in the fight, and was in hesitation and doubt as to the propriety of fighting against them. By his discourse, Lord Krishna dispelled his doubts and fears, and roused him to action.

GURU.—Literally one who dissolves ignorance. It is a universal word for the preceptor among the Hindus, who are enjoined to look upon the teacher or the preceptor as a God.

GYMKHANA.—Made up of two words 'Gym' and 'Khana' the latter of which means a house or abode in Hindustani. Sports or Athletic clubs of the Europeans in India or the Anglo-Indians are usually called by that name.

HARISCHANDRA.—An ancient Indian king who was a martyr to truth and who was finally rewarded by the Gods. He would not swerve from his promise for gold or pleasure, and kept so faithfully to truth that he had to send his beloved queen to menial work, to take to a hideous calling himself and finally was very near to beheading his own wife in the performance of his duty. The story of Job in the Bible looks like a faint and distorted echo of the life of this royal martyr.

HIRANYAKASIPU.—One of the supermen of Hindu tradition, commonly known as a demon king; he had conquered all the world by his physical strength and aspired to displace Vishnu, the protector of creation.

IDJMA.—Meaning a general gathering. It is the term used by the Muhammadans for the principle of assembling together for social and religious purposes. In significance it is the same as *Jama* or *Jamiat*. The doctrine of Idjma is that the general will of the community should prevail.

JUTKA.—A two-wheeled vehicle drawn by a pony common in all Indian towns.

JATAYU.—The king of the eagles in the Ramayana. This eagle-king was a friend of Rama, and attacked Ravana as he was carrying Sita away in his chariot. Ravana cruelly wounded him in the fight, but Jatayu lived just long enough to give an account of his adventure to Rama.

JANAKA.—The king of Videha and father of Sita, the heroine of the Ramayana. He was reputed to be a great scholar and sage as well.

KALI.—The consort of Rudra, and the fierce goddess of destruction. The Hindus worship her as the mother of the Universe and offer sacrifices to her.

KARNA.—One of the heroes of the Mahabharata. He was the elder brother of the Pandavas but was ignorant of the relationship, and, rescued by Duryodhana, the head of the Kauravas, he fought against his own brothers even after he knew the secret of his birth. His name is a byword for generosity and valour.

KAYASTHAS.—A prominent community in Bengal, believed by some to be descendants of Kshatriyas.

KRISHNA.—Prince of Dwaraka, and a chief character in the Mahabharata. He was an eminent philosopher and statesman, who tried to mediate between the Pandavas and the Kauravas, and acted as charioteer to Arjuna, one of the Pandava brothers, in the battle. He is the author of the Gita,

and is looked upon and worshipped as the eighth avatar or incarnation of Vishnu.

KSHATRIYAS.—Literally bold and strong men, the name given to the ruling caste among the Hindus.

KURUKSHETRA.—Literally the field of the Kurus. It was the battlefield of the Mahabharata war and is believed to be in the vicinity of Panipat.

LAMBANIS.—A community, easily mistaken for Gypsies. They are a division of the Vanijars or Brinjaries, the grain-carriers, who followed armies on the march and opened their bazaar as the armies encamped. Their occupation being lost, they have become wandering tribes. Lambanis is the name given to them in South India.

LAKSHMI.—The Goddess of Wealth and the consort of Vishnu. Her chief characteristic is believed to be her unsteadiness and restlessness.

MADHYADESA.—The Central Region of Aryavarta or the land of the Aryans; the land between the Jumna and the Ganges was known as such and the Aryans of that region used to pride themselves upon their purity as Aryans in blood and custom.

MADHAVACHARYA.—A Hindu religious reformer of the 12th Century in South India. He was the exponent of the *Dwaita* school or of Dualism.

MAHABHARATA.—One of the two famous epics of the Hindus consisting, in its present rescensions, of 1,24,000 verses and describing the war of the Kurus and the Pandavas. There is not a Hindu, young or old, man or woman, who is not familiar with the details of the great story.

MANU.—An ancient law-giver of the Hindus. His book known as Manava Dharma Sastra is a code of laws and customs, as they obtained in ancient times. The book has been revised several times and the text interfered with so that what now prevails as the code of Manu is suspected to be unfaithful to the original.

MANTRAS.—Originally meaning the sacred utterances of the Rishis, later on applied to all ritual utterances, and associated with mystic properties. Hence Mantra came to mean a secret formula as well.

MAMOOLS.—Customary presents in the past, but enforced and claimed as rights in the present; most common among petty revenue officials who insist on their mamools in kind or coin before rendering their services to the peasant cultivators.

NYAYA.—One of the six schools of Hindu Philosophy, expounded by the sage Gautama; it explained the origin and composition of the Cosmos, and came dangerously near denying God.

NIRVANA.—Supreme bliss after death: the word used in Buddhism for what corresponds to final beatitude.

PARIAH.—Name given in South India to the lowest caste.

PARASURAMA—or Rama with battle-axe, the sixth incarnation of Vishnu. Born of a Brahmin family, he resented an insult of a Kshatriya king so deeply that he vowed to destroy the Kshatriyas as a whole. He is said to have compaigned 21 times and annihilated them.

PANCHAYAT.—Literally a council of five for adjudication. It is the general name for village and caste meetings.

PATTADAR.—The registered owner of lands for cultivation, from whom the land revenue is claimed by Government.

PRAKRITI.—The faminine aspect of God-Supreme, the masculine being known as *Purusha*.

PRANAYAMA.—Meaning breath control literally. It is a breath regulating exercise with an appropriate prayer, preliminary to all religious ceremonies.

PURANAS.—A class of Hindu literature, embodying history, mythology and tradition. Latter-day Hindu observances rest on the authority of these books of which there are 18 chief ones.

RAGAS.—Modes of melody in Hindu music. The major ragas are 72 in number, minor ones being innumerable.

RAMAYANA.—The Hindu epic, dealing with Rama's exile in the forest and separation from his beloved wife Sita. It is a work of about 25,000 verses and embodies the ideals of Hindu society.

RISHIS.—Literally, seers possessing divine knowledge. The name is given by the Hindus to their ancient sages.

RUDRA.—Means fierce; it is a name for Siva the destroyer of the Universe, in the Hindu conception of the God-head.

RYOT.—The peasant cultivator in India. Ryotwari settlement is one by which the Government deals directly with the ryots in all land revenue collections and not with the landlords or the village panchayats. Under it, the ryot holds his land directly from the Government and pays his dues direct to Government.

SASTRAS.—Common name among Hindus for law books and codes of customary practices. Silpa Sastras are those which deal with the decorative arts and crafts.

SAREE.—The dress of Hindu women consists chiefly of one long piece of cloth, which is tied at the waist, one end of it being brought over a shoulder and thrown across. Saree is the name given to it.

SARASWATI.—The Hindu Goddess of learning, corresponding in a way to Pallas Athena of the Greeks.

SATI.—The custom that existed among the Hindus of the wife immolating herself on the funeral pyre of her dead husband.

SANYASI.—One who has renounced worldly life and lives as an ascetic or recluse. There are various orders among the sanyasins and they are to be seen wandering almost everywhere in India.

SAHUKAR.—A banker who lends money for interest.

SAVITRI.—Savitri was a princess and insisted on marrying a prince in exile, knowing that he could live for but a year. When his end approached, she waited on Yama or the God of Death and pleased him by her devotion. Yama overcome, not only restored her husband but also gave several boons in addition. Her story occurs in the Mahabharata and sets the ideal to the wife's devotion among the Hindus.

Srutis.—Means revealed knowledge, and is applied to the Vedas, which are divine revelations according to the Hindus. The Smrities are, on the other hand, traditional knowledge recorded in books.

SUSRUTA.—Reputed to be a sage; author of a standard work on medicine among the Hindus.

TAHSILDAR.—The Revenue Officer over a Tahsil or Taluk, a small revenue division.

THOTI.—The village sweeper, one of the Barabaloot, or 12 hereditary village servants, who were given annual shares in the produce in return for their services.

THUG.—Name for a member of a murderous gang who, disguised as travellers, joined others to kill them and appropriate their property.

UPANISHADS.—One class of sacred books of the Hindus, mostly in the form of conversations between the teacher and taught, enunciating the loftiest principles of human philosophy. Chief among them are considered 18, though there are many more. The world as *Maya* or delusion, the

doctrine of *Karma* and rebirth, and the individual soul attaining perfection through a series of mundane lives and finally obtaining *mukti* or release by merging in Para-Brahman, the Universal Soul, are among the principles of the Upanishads.

VAISYA.—Meaning 'of the people' at first, it was applied to the main body of the Aryans after the differentiation of the warrior and priestly classes; it means generally the wealth-earning class and is applied to merchants and traders.

VAISHNAVA.—A devotee of Vishnu. Among the Hindus sects are designated according to the God worshipped, those who worship Siva being called Saivites, those worshipping Vishṇu Vaishnavas or Vaishnavites, etc.

VAKIL.—A practising lawyer.

VASISHTHA.—A sage of Ancient India and known as a Brahmarshi. Viswamitra was the son of a king, and was worsted in contest with Vasishtha. All the arrows and weapons of Viswamitra were powerless before Vasishtha's spiritual power. Thereupon Viswamitra renounced his princely rights and took to performing penance, and set himself to obtain recognition as a Brahmarshi.

VIDURANITI.—A code of morals propounded by Vidura, one of the characters in the Mahabharata and a devotee of Lord Krishna.

VIDYARANYA.—A great Hindu scholar of the 14th Century A.D., a commentator on the orthodox texts and a religious reformer.

VEDAS.—Literally knowledge and called also Sruti to indicate their revealed character. They are four in number and are the most ancient and sacred of Sanskrit books. They are looked upon as the final authority in religion by the Hindus.

YOGIS.—Those that undergo many forms and grades of spiritual discipline and strive after perfection of the Spirit. They are more or less the same as the Sanyasies.

YUDHISTHIRA.—The first among the five Pandava Princes of the Mahabharata; called also Dharmaraja on account of his very high sense of right and wrong.

ZAMINDAR.—A big landowner as distinguished from a petty landlord. On that account in Bengal, the settlement is known as Zamindari, since it is the Zamindars who collect their rents from the petty peasants and pay the revenue to Government.

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